United Nations
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

50th PLENARY MEETING
Thursday, 4 November 1993 at 3 p.m.

NEW YORK

President: Mr. INSANALLY (Guyana)

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 24 *(continued)*

UNITED NATIONS NEW AGENDA FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICA IN THE 1990s

(a) REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/48/334, A/48/336 and Corr.1)

(b) NOTE BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TRANSMITTING A REPORT BY THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS (A/48/335 and Add.1)

Mrs. GHIMIRE (Nepal): The continued economic stagnation of the industrialized countries, resulting in higher unemployment rates and increasing protectionist measures, is a matter of serious concern to all developing countries. This is especially true for those African countries - in particular the countries of sub-Saharan Africa - which have embarked on structural reforms and open market economic policies.

The African countries, despite serious economic hardships and untenable social conditions, forged ahead with the process of reforms with new vigour and enthusiasm on the strength of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. The understanding reached between the international community and the African countries is crystal-clear. While the African countries have the basic responsibility of implementing economic reforms for sustainable development, the international community has agreed, *inter alia*, to find a solution to the debt problem and provide additional support for economic diversification and integration. Even without my going into an in-depth review of the implementation of the New Agenda for Africa, the current situation of the African countries speaks for itself.

Most developing countries in Africa face the problems of high population growth, widespread hunger, disease, malnutrition and absolute poverty. The economies of most of these countries, in particular those of sub-Saharan Africa, have become marginalized in recent years, and the economic situation in the least developed countries has become extremely precarious. Economic growth in these countries has remained stagnant, and has even declined in some States, and their per capita output is steadily diminishing. People, especially children, are dying every day from hunger and malnutrition.

Moreover, the rate of inflation has exacerbated the situation in these countries. As a result, their export earnings have declined tremendously. The last decade has seen civil strife and political instability in several African countries. Drought and desertification have become the other two major problems in Africa, especially in the eastern and southern regions.

My delegation notes with appreciation the initiative of the Secretary-General in presenting two very useful reports (A/48/335 and A/48/336) relating to the establishment of a diversification fund and to overall resource flows to Africa. In this context, we also commend the efforts of international agencies and financial institutions to ameliorate the socio-economic problems of Africa. One report reaches the conclusion that:

This record is subject to correction.
Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Section, Room C-178, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

93-87086 (E)

Distr. GENERAL

A/48/PV.50
24 November 1993

ENGLISH

> "A combination of rising indebtedness, rapid population growth, environmental degradation, political instability and civil strife, over-dependence on a few primary commodities for export earnings and a steep decline in their prices has led to a long-run fall in per capita incomes and a sharp deterioration in the nutritional situation in the region." *(A/48/335, annex, Summary para. (ii))*

My delegation fully supports the implementation of the recommendations of the reports. International and regional financial institutions, including the African Development Bank, can play a pivotal role in the implementation of the programmes. Likewise, United Nations bodies such as the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations can be instrumental in helping to evolve commodity diversification programmes. We believe that the African countries can benefit greatly from export diversification projects by invigorating their economies through the "multiplier effect".

It is a matter of great satisfaction that a diversification facility for African commodities has been recommended to be established in the African Development Bank for an initial period of three to four years, with resources of about $50 million to $75 million for commodity diversification programmes and projects. The establishment of national diversification councils, as proposed, will be the mainstay of the programme's sustainability. There is also a need for development assistance to prepare viable diversification projects so that these will be feasible and result-oriented. It is not necessary to reiterate that the need for additional resources and debt-relief measures for these African countries has never been so profound.

My delegation appreciates the efforts of the Japanese Government, the United Nations and the Global Coalition for Africa in organizing the Tokyo International Conference on African Development on 5 and 6 October this year. We are of the view that the recommendations of this Conference on issues such as aid, trade, debt strategy and investments are very useful and timely in taking up the development challenges. We are pleased to note the concerns and solidarity expressed by the European Community and the Nordic countries with regard to the developing countries of Africa, especially the least developed ones.

Nepal, as a land-locked and least developed country in South Asia, has great sympathy and support for its African brothers and sisters in their endeavours for a better future. As a matter of fact our socio-economic problems are similar in nature. We express our solidarity with the countries of Africa. Nepal is also engaged in securing a better future for its people through various economic development programmes. In this context, we urge the international financial institutions and the donor countries to give special priority to the development needs of the least developed countries.

In conclusion, we believe that socio-economic development can be accelerated through the practice of more liberal international trade policies, North-South cooperation, and better international understanding and economic cooperation for resolving the problems of the developing countries.

Mr. NYAKYI (United Republic of Tanzania): My delegation has been looking forward with eagerness and expectation to this debate on the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s in the belief that it will provide us with an opportunity for a comprehensive review of the programme and follow-up mechanism. We associate ourselves with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Egypt, Ambassador Nabil A. Elaraby, who spoke on behalf of Africa, outlining the challenges which confront the African region and making suggestions to improve the worsening situation. May I also express my gratitude for the statement made by the Chairman of the Group of 77, the Permanent Representative of Colombia, Ambassador Luis Fernando Jaramillo, which my delegation fully supports.

This General Assembly debate marks the first of the five steps expected to be taken by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, respectively, in the follow-up, assessment and evaluation programme of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa, namely, preliminary consideration of the implementation of the Agenda. The Secretary General's report (A/48/335) entitled "Need for and feasibility of the establishment of a diversification fund for Africa's commodities" is a welcome contribution to the process at a time when the overall picture on African recovery has been bleak and disappointing. Africa's recovery has been slow, and growth performance has remained extremely poor. Per capita incomes today are well below the 1970 levels. In all, Africa has been suffering from a continuing deterioration of its external environment.

This debate gives us an opportunity to examine the successes and failures of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Recovery and Development 1986-1990. Looking back, it is quite clear that the diagnosis of Africa's problems as outlined in the Programme of Action was correct and the prescription very appropriate. Unfortunately, the administration of the Programme was

flawed and inadequate, and so it failed to meet the challenges of African development in the late 1980s. Therefore, none of the goals of the Programme of Action were fully realized. Targets for growth, food security, human investment and debt reduction were missed, so declines, rather than hoped for increases, were recorded by many States and by Africa as a whole.

The reason for the failure of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Recovery and Development 1986-1990 was clear. It was, quite simply, lack of adequate resource flows to Africa. The bilateral and multilateral performances with respect to net resource transfers and debt burden reduction were below expectation. Africa suffered from a serious fall in commodity earnings. Wars, civil strife and other exogenous events, such as drought, desertification and a collapse in the terms of trade, imposed devastating costs. The decrease in overall performance was, in part, accounted for by an unsatisfactory export situation, which resulted in an overall growth of African economies from 1986 to 1990 averaging less than 2.5 per cent a year. In countries ravaged by war and natural calamities such as drought, the scarcity of food supplies led to famine.

The implementation of structural adjustment programmes, whatever their likely favourable medium-term and long-term impact, has not been without social stress, disruption and political risk. The reduction in the levels of per capita consumption and of imports has had social costs, in particular for health, education, nutrition, employment and the maintenance of social institutions. Despite the agreement in the Programme of Action to deal urgently with commodity issues, taking into account the special interests of the African countries, no additional efforts were made to provide measures of stabilization, at reasonably renumerative levels, of earnings for those commodities and minerals that are of primary interest to Africa. The decrease in overall performance was, therefore, in part accounted for by the unsatisfactory export situation. Trade gains fell below expectations and in many key commodity areas Africa suffered a decline in market share.

However, the Programme of Action was not a total failure. It focused world attention on African economic problems and by doing so it achieved policy and efficiency gains and averted a more severe decline in net resource flows, and as a result the economic decline afflicting Africa was slowed down. Furthermore, the process of African policy restructuring and its interaction with development partners have led to substantial lessons being taught.

The most hopeful development in the area of commodities occurred during the seventh session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), with the agreement establishing the Common Fund for Commodities. The Conference acknowledged the need for lasting solutions to deal effectively with the short-term, medium-term and long-term problems of the commodities sector and recognized that international cooperation between producers and consumers was necessary for the achievement of these objectives. The Conference also called for the implementation of a number of policies and measures, including diversification, as an important long-term objective.

It was against this background that the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s was launched almost three years ago. The Agenda offers yet another opportunity for renewal of the commitment of the international community to support Africa's own efforts to achieve self-sustaining socio-economic growth and development. It is also an occasion to refocus world attention on the socio-economic difficulties which continue to face the African continent.

A priority objective of the New Agenda is the acceleration of the transformation, integration, diversification and growth of the African economies, in order to strengthen them within the world economy, reduce their vulnerability to external shocks and increase their dynamism, internalize the process of development and enhance self-reliance. It also accords special attention to human development, to increasing productive employment and to promoting rapid progress towards the achievement of human-oriented goals by the year 2000.

But in order to achieve those objectives it is necessary for the international community to enter into a new and stronger accord with Africa, which spells out clearly the firm commitment of the international community to support and assist Africa in its efforts to implement successfully its development agenda, and reduce, and possibly eliminate, external impediments and obstacles to Africa's accelerated socio-economic transformation.

The Agenda clearly spells out the fact that the critical element in support from the international community is the provision of adequate resource flows to Africa. The Secretary-General has estimated that for African countries to achieve an annual growth rate of real gross national product of at least 6 per cent over the course of the 1990s, the required minimum $30 billion in net official development assistance would need to grow at an average rate of 4 per cent per annum.

The New Agenda has provided the African countries with the opportunity to renew their commitment to their own development. Africa is committed to the implementation of policies to transform the structures of its economies in order to achieve growth and development on a sustained and sustainable basis. It has also resolved to pursue with vigour the policy of achieving effective regional and subregional economic cooperation and integration and, eventually, the establishment of the African Economic Community. The promotion of sectoral integration to ensure the development and maintenance of a reliable network of agricultural, physical, industrial and institutional infrastructures on the continent falls squarely within the commitments of Africa to the New Agenda.

However, those commitments will not reap the intended benefits without a favourable investment atmosphere. Therefore, Africa is also committed to the creation of an enabling environment within the New Agenda that attracts foreign and domestic direct investment, encourages savings, induces the return of flight capital and promotes full participation by the private sector, including non-governmental organizations, in the growth and development process.

The *World Economic Survey, 1993* has, if anything, dampened our hopes of realizing positive developments in the first three years of implementation of the New Agenda. It shows that while the economies of the other developing countries grew substantially in the period 1992-1993, in Africa, which accounts for as much as one fifth of the population of the developing world, per capita output has continued to decline almost every year since the 1980s. The *Survey* adds:

> "In sub-Saharan Africa, the record was far worse. Affected by drought, political crisis and civil strife, output in the region barely grew while human suffering increased ...
>
> "The drought increased pressure on the balance of payments, owing to higher food imports and lower exports, and on fiscal budgets, as a result of relief programmes implemented." *(E/1993/60-ST/ESA/237, pp. 40-41)*

Since the beginning of the present decade the net aggregate resource flows to Africa have declined; they were lower by 22 per cent in 1992 than in 1990. Africa's share of net aggregate resource flows has been falling, despite a rise in total flows to developing countries. By comparison, net aggregate flows to Europe and Central Asia jumped from $15.2 billion in 1990 to $31.9 billion in 1992. During the same period net aggregate flows to the East Asia and Pacific region rose from $26.3 billion to $34.7 billion; to Latin America and the Caribbean from $15.6 billion to $18.4 billion; and to South Asia from $7.8 billion to $10.1 billion.

As I have said, African countries have renewed their commitment to their own development within the framework of the New Agenda. The new enabling environment being promoted by many African countries in the 1990s promises vast commercial potential. In the three years of the implementation of the New Agenda important macroeconomic policy measures have been undertaken within the overall programme of budgetary restraint and the consolidation of reform measures. Large currency devaluations were implemented, rationalization of the operations of public enterprises was launched and lay-offs of staff and other actions calculated to increase the efficiency of the civil service were carried out. Efforts to deal with the disequilibrium in the domestic economy and to reestablish financial stability have led many African countries to continue to implement austerity programmes.

However, economic reform has not brought a significant increase in investment, according to the *World Economic Survey, 1993*. In almost all African countries it remains far below its peak levels of the mid-1970s. Foreign exchange scarcity, associated with debt servicing, low and declining prices of commodities and terms-of-trade losses, has limited the capacity to import capital goods.

Those policy measures were pursued under extreme fiscal and budgetary constraints. Government investment expenditures, and especially social spending, have been affected by the fiscal cut-backs. Consequently, education, health, sanitation and many other social services have become increasing inaccessible or lacking. In the least developed countries of Africa, of which my country is one, the share of gross domestic investment in gross domestic product averaged 15 per cent, against only 3.8 per cent for gross domestic savings. The number of least developed countries in Africa has risen from 21 in 1981 to 32 in 1993.

Africa's dependence on official development assistance has increased sharply over the past decade and is now nearly total, due to its limited access to private loans and foreign direct investment. Both exogenous and endogenous factors have caused the lower inflow of foreign direct investment into Africa. The exogenous factors have included the poor outlook for prices for African commodity exports and the increased competition from other regions. The endogenous factors are the uncertainty surrounding commitment programmes, high levels of external debt and other factors that limit short-term growth prospects.

Africa's financial needs in the 1990s have to be addressed in the face of declining resources available from official sources, commercial banks and foreign direct investment. It is a fact that African countries have suffered substantial losses of earnings since the 1980s due to adverse terms of trade.

At the same time, many African countries are burdened with high external debt and high debt-service payments, with many of them accumulating arrears. The extent of the African debt burden has become part and parcel of the financial resources necessary for the economic recovery and development of the continent. The elements of the new strategy should encompass action on all categories of external debt - bilateral, multilateral and commercial. Priority attention should be given to bilateral debt, given its predominance in Africa's external obligations.

Africa's share of international trade has been declining even in the areas of primary commodities, which dominate Africa's exports, and that trend continues. Manufactures still constitute only around 10 per cent of Africa's exports, and most of them are low-value consumer items and other light manufactures that are primarily traded internationally between neighbouring countries. In 1992 the prices of virtually all primary commodities were lower. The prices of coffee and cocoa - the region's most important exports after crude petroleum - fell another 15 per cent to their lowest levels in over 20 years.

The report of the Secretary-General on the need for and the feasibility of establishing a diversification fund for Africa's commodities is both timely and urgent. The report rightly points out that there is a gap in development assistance for the preparation of diversification projects that are attractive to investors. It is suggested that to fill this gap a special facility be established for the purpose of financing the pre-investment phase of commodity-diversification projects. Such a facility could provide a necessary focal point for channelling and augmenting assistance in this priority area. According to the Secretary-General's report, it could also result in more extensive and more cost-effective use of technical services and of the expertise of the specialized agencies, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

The total amount that would be required to establish such a pre-investment facility is $50 million to $70 million. It is expected that the facility's resources would be raised from bilateral donors on a voluntary basis, and that there would also be contributions from multilateral financing institutions. We understand that the amount spent on external assistance for commodity-diversification projects in Africa is less than $1 a head - or 2 per cent of the earnings from exports of primary products - which is a tiny fraction of the total external-assistance requirement. For this reason, we urge our development partners and multilateral financial institutions to contribute to the diversification fund with a view to its becoming operational not later than December 1994.

I should like, in conclusion, to appeal once again to the international community to increase the flow of financial resources to Africa, as these are crucial to the regeneration and sustainable development of African economies. In particular, we urge States that have not yet met the target allocation of 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product for official development assistance to do so in this decade with a view to the creation of a better environment for realizing a 4 per cent rate of real growth in annual financial-resource flows to Africa, as outlined in the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

We commend the Government of Japan, the United Nations and the Global Coalition for Africa for organizing the Tokyo Conference on African Development. This was a step in a direction that we hope others will take. We request Governments, organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to take appropriate measures to honour the commitments contained in the Tokyo Declaration.

We strongly believe that if the international community meets its obligation, as outlined in the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, Africa will be able to join the rest of humankind in celebrating the start of the twenty-first century with optimism, confident of a better future for its peoples.

Mr. HAJNOCZI (Austria): Austria welcomes the opportunity provided by the scheduling of this evaluation of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s to focus our attention on Africa once again. The very length of the list of representatives who want to speak on this item indicates that, at a time when warnings of the imminent marginalization of Africa are being voiced in different quarters, Africa's concerns and aspirations continue to be given their due weight in the General Assembly.

At the heart of the agreement on the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s - the agreement recorded in resolution 46/151, which was reached only after difficult negotiations - lies recognition of the fact that the development of Africa is a task to be carried out in

partnership. The New Agenda states clearly that Africa's development is primarily the responsibility of Africans. It states also that the international community accepts the principle of shared responsibility and full partnership with Africa and therefore commits itself to the provision of full and tangible support for the African effort.

Only through such joint endeavours, involving first and foremost the African Governments themselves, can we avoid the loss of another decade in the development of Africa. This is the first review exercise. Let us conduct it honestly and courageously - even though we may have concluded that both partners in this joint endeavour could have done better - so that in the years to come we shall indeed be able to do better.

The famous saying that "development" is another word for "peace" has become almost commonplace. There is cause, however, to turn the saying around and underline the fact that peace is an indispensable prerequisite for development. The end of the cold war should have opened up opportunities for the peaceful resolution of conflicts; yet fratricidal wars continue to rage. With 6 million uprooted people, Africa is the continent with the largest number of refugees and internally displaced persons. There are major United Nations operations going on in eight different African countries. Against this backdrop of intense suffering and colossal waste of productivity, we welcome the recent creation of a regional conflict-prevention mechanism, in the context of the Organization of African Unity, as being particularly timely.

Statistical evidence seems to indicate that economic development ceases when population-growth rates go above a certain range. With these rates going far above this range, Africa faces another major challenge, which only Africans can tackle successfully.

Let me now turn to the signs of hope.

First of all, there is universal awareness of the fact that the problems threatening African development must be addressed efficiently. In this context, I should like to pay a tribute to the Government of Japan for organizing and hosting the international Conference on African Development in early October. The Tokyo Conference went a long way towards forging a new Africa-donor partnership.

Secondly, I should like to pay a tribute to the many African leaders who have had the courage to face up to difficulties of near-overwhelming proportions and have started to develop their countries. In a number of countries, adjustment and reform programmes have been successfully implemented, and sound macro-economic policies have been adopted. It is high time for the international community to do its part. Austria is working towards the provision of better access to markets for African exports - in particular, in the context of the Uruguay Round. We are striving to gear our technical assistance better towards the needs of recipient countries. We are endeavouring, despite difficult circumstances, to at least maintain the level of our financial aid through official development assistance and debt relief.

While progress has been made since the adoption of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, the improvements are not sufficiently far-reaching. While the New Agenda aims at an annual growth rate of 6 per cent for African economies, the Secretary-General's report on financial - resource flows to Africa tells us that the real growth in Africa's gross domestic product in 1992 was 1.5 per cent - half of the region's population growth rate. Financial flows to Africa seem to be decreasing rather than increasing. Net aggregate resource flows to Africa in 1992 were lower by 22 per cent, in real terms, than those of 1990. The debt burden is still crippling a large number of African countries. It is clear that renewed efforts by the international community are called for.

One proposal to give concrete form to a renewed commitment to the development of Africa is before us in the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) report contained in the annex to document A/48/335, entitled "Need for and feasibility of the establishment of a diversification fund for Africa's commodities."

Austria is prepared to study this proposal very carefully. We are indeed interested in hearing the reactions of all our partners. We would like to point out at this stage that great care should be taken not to duplicate already existing structures or mechanisms such as the Lomé Conventions or the Common Fund for Commodities. Care should also be taken not to fall into the trap of seeing the proposed diversification fund for African commodities as a panacea for all the problems beleaguering the African continent. FAO, in proposing the creation of this fund, underlines that it will work only if Governments succeed in creating the right enabling environment, including favourable legal and tax systems, adequate infrastructure, well-functioning capital markets and human resource development. In pursuing the idea of a diversification fund for African commodities, it would also seem imperative to take into account the expertise of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in commodity matters and the pertinent comments of the Secretary-General.

Finally, I should like to make some remarks on my country's policies with regard to the African continent.

Mindful of the importance of further intensifying Austria's relations to African countries, the Austrian Foreign Ministry is elaborating a framework concept, called "Africa 2000". This concept will be finalized by the end of this year and will contain guidelines for Austria's foreign policy in the political, economic, cultural and administrative domains.

With regard to development cooperation proper, I should like to point out that Austria's development cooperation emphasizes the creation of framework conditions conducive to social and economic development that is environmentally sustainable and aims at eradicating poverty, fulfilling basic needs and enhancing the country's capacity to participate successfully in the world economy. The three-year programme for development cooperation for 1994 through 1997 was adopted by the Austrian Government this past July. It concentrates Austrian development cooperation efforts on eight countries. Among these eight countries, six are in Africa.

Austria also participates in the debt relief endeavours of the Paris Club. Furthermore we take an active part in the ongoing negotiations to elaborate a framework convention to combat desertification in those countries that experience serious drought or desertification, particularly in Africa. The Austrian Government continues to strive for the realization of the official development assistance target of 0.7 per cent of our gross national product.

Let me conclude by reiterating Austria's commitment to contributing our share towards the implementation of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the years to come.

Mr. AYEWAH (Nigeria): My delegation is pleased to speak on agenda item 24, entitled "United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s".

It will be recalled that in its resolution 45/178 A of 19 December 1990, the General Assembly - by establishing an Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the forty-fifth session for the purpose of preparing, for the forty-sixth session, the final review and appraisal of the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 - had set the tone for a productive dialogue between African countries and the international community on the resolution of the region's socio-economic problems. The adoption of the Programme by the General Assembly five years earlier at its Thirteenth Special Session, in June 1986, had taken place amidst high hopes, unqualified optimism and general expectations that Africa's socio-economic problems would finally begin to receive commensurate attention from the international community. The latter was required to provide the crucial, supportive environment, in terms of increased financial resources and technical assistance to African countries in order to foster sustained economic development, human resource development, and trade and commodity diversification and expansion. African Governments, in committing themselves irrevocably to the pursuit of policies and programmes that would ensure that the economic situation of the region improved, had undertaken fundamental reforms and adjustment programmes, painfully executed at great sacrifice to their economies and peoples.

It was therefore with the full acknowledgement of the international community that Africa was proclaimed as constituting one of the five priorities of the United Nations in the 1990s, that my country - and indeed the entire African continent - hailed the unanimous adoption by the forty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly of resolution 46/151 on the New Agenda, designed primarily to serve as a catalyst, and to provide political impulse and strength to the other activities taking place within and outside Africa. The conclusion was that the results achieved so far had fallen far short of the expectations both of African countries and of the international community. Hence the renewed commitment to African development, based on the principle of shared responsibility and full partnership between Africa and the international community. More importantly, the New Agenda set specific targets to be achieved in the 1990s, and these include an average annual growth rate in gross domestic product of at least 6 per cent and a minimum of $30 billion in net official development assistance in 1992, after which gross domestic product would need to grow at an average rate of 4 per cent per annum.

It can no longer be denied that the critical socio-economic situation facing Africa since the early 1980s has not received the requisite attention from the international community. A recent survey of economic and social conditions indicates that, after losing the development momentum during the 1980s, African countries have not yet experienced durable and self-sustaining economic recovery.

The continent's economic output grew by a mere 1.5 per cent in 1992, after having grown by only 2.3 per cent in 1991 and just 3.1 per cent in 1990. Indeed, from 1980 to the present, Africa is the only region in the world which has suffered and continues to suffer a decrease in average income and where the incidence of poverty has increased. African countries continue to be weighed down by a heavy external debt burden. The

service of this debt consumed about 24 per cent of the region's export revenues last year, and in some countries the debt service burden was much higher.

The continued lackluster economic outlook of the African countries is proof that the reforms which have been implemented so far have not tackled the fundamental structural weaknesses. Until these inadequacies are corrected, countries will not break the shackles of under-development to define for themselves new comparative advantages within a changing world economy.

Vast amounts of resources need to be mobilized now, both from within Africa and from external partners, and invested in a massive programme to upgrade human productive capacities, modernize institutions, and transfer, adapt and disseminate science and technology. Increased inter-African trade and trade with the rest of the world are vital to Africa's sustained economic recovery and growth.

In this connection, my delegation wishes to place on record its gratitude and appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for the welcome submission of three reports: on the preliminary consideration of the implementation of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (A/48/334); on the need for and feasibility of a diversification fund for Africa's commodities (A/48/335 and Add.1); and on overall resource flows to Africa (A/48/336 and Corr.1). We commend the Secretary-General's effort to ensure the successful implementation of the New Agenda. We note, with appreciation, the establishment of a high-level panel to advise and assist him on African development, in particular on the implementation of the New Agenda. We request this panel to continue to meet regularly under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General and to make its recommendations available annually to Member States.

We also welcome with appreciation the Tokyo Conference on African Development convened by the Government of Japan, which has just concluded, and the unanimous adoption by the participants of the Tokyo Declaration, an instrument designed to convey a high-level political commitment to African development, with clear reference to the United Nations New Agenda for African Development and its priorities.

The Secretary-General, in his report, drew the attention of the international community to the need for, and feasibility of, a diversification fund for Africa's commodities as prepared and recommended by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Indeed, a combination of rising indebtedness, rapid population growth, environmental degradation, political instability and civil strife, over-dependence on a few primary commodities for export earnings and a steep decline in their prices has led to a long-run fall in per capita income and a sharp deterioration in the state of nutrition in the region. The need for diversification is very compelling. The region relies on too few commodities for export earnings, and export of those commodities has been stagnant and offers little prospect for growth. In these circumstances, diversification is a logical step in the promotion of development by strengthening the commodity sector and fostering economic links between various sectors.

My delegation therefore calls for the establishment of a diversification facility for Africa's commodities within the African Development Bank for an initial period of three to four years with adequate resources to assist the preparation of commodity diversification projects and programmes.

We urge Member States and multilateral organizations to contribute to this diversification facility with a view to making it operational no later than 31 December 1995. We urge African countries to establish national diversification councils comprising representatives from the government, the private sector, the scientific community and multilateral organizations, in order to generate project proposals that fit into national diversification programmes and priorities.

Another critical element of the support from the international community is the provision of adequate resource flows to Africa. These resources are needed to contribute to achieving the required levels of growth and development. While the need for financing Africa's economic recovery and development is becoming critical, financial resources are shrinking. The financial resources required for Africa as a whole are estimated to be in excess of $56 billion annually; between 1993 and 2005, Africa's estimated need will be $950 billion or $90 billion per year (in 1990 dollars) in external financial resources, of which $490 billion should be in debt relief or cancellation. By contrast, there is great concern that international support for Africa's economic recovery may not be forthcoming. Net transfers to Africa fell from $14.4 billion in 1990 to about $12.6 billion in 1991. The terms-of-trade losses for Africa as a whole are estimated at $5.6 billion in 1991, or between 1.5 and 2 per cent of the gross domestic product. Indeed, the slow progress, in the last two years, of the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) cannot but be viewed with serious concern by African countries. The importance Africa attaches to expanding international trade, free of protectionist barriers, and the need to expedite the conclusion of the negotiations that have been stalled cannot be minimized.

It has become abundantly clear and universally acknowledged that the problems of the continent are not of a short-term nature alone. Immediate and drastic action to help Africa overcome the present crisis and then to achieve sustained growth in the long run is not only essential on humanitarian grounds but is also in the interest of the entire international community. The world can hardly be safe, stable and peaceful when millions of people across an entire continent are dismally poor and ill-fed.

As the United Nations New Agenda for African Development in the 1990s illustrates, what needs to be done both at the national and at the international level is clear. The time for reflection, study and discussion has indeed passed. Now is the time for action.

Mr. PENNANEACH (Togo) *(interpretation from French)*: Two years ago, following the failure of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, the international community, in a spirit of solidarity, adopted the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, a strategy for saving our continent from its present economic stagnation. Today the international community meets again for a preliminary assessment of the action taken to give fresh momentum to the pursuit of the objectives of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

We pay a tribute to the Secretary-General, whose reports contain substantive proposals and recommendations for the success of the Agenda. We wish also to thank the Bureau of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries, under the able leadership of Mr. Ould Abdallah.

I join other representatives who have already spoken in noting that despite the Secretary-General's personal commitment to the quest for the necessary resources, the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s has had a difficult time getting under way. Hence, today's debate is vital, in the light of the economic crisis that continues to assail the continent. We all know that Africa is experiencing serious difficulties resulting from the external-debt burden, deteriorating terms of trade, dwindling capital flows, natural disasters and inadequate assistance.

Today's debate bears witness to the international community's commitment to the development of Africa, which is one of the five priorities of the United Nations. Solutions proposed by various quarters to rescue Africa from the crisis clearly show that the problem of Africa is not an isolated one: it is linked to the international climate.

From past failures, Africans have learned useful lessons with respect to enacting far-reaching reforms for Africa's lasting development. Thus, in the economic sphere, more than two thirds of African countries have agreed to drastic programmes of structural adjustment; they have taken courageous measures to reform their financial and monetary systems; they have created the conditions necessary to attract foreign investment, in particular by adopting very liberal investment codes. Similarly, most of these States have withdrawn from commercial activities and have privatized many enterprises.

In the agricultural sector, there has been an effort to diversify production. Unfortunately, this has often been limited by a lack of financing and by other factors such as drought.

In the area of economic integration, although trade within Africa still accounts for less than 5 per cent of the regional total, African Governments are clearly determined to hasten the process of integration. It is clear that the obstacles that continue to hamper the free movement of persons, goods and capital are gradually disappearing.

In the political arena, I would note that the democratization of institutions has begun, in keeping with the aspirations and situation of each country. That process, turbulent though it may be, will be consolidated in the long term and will inspire much greater investor confidence.

Are those measures enough to end Africa's crisis? Obviously not, especially as the structures remain fragile. My delegation therefore believes that the severe crisis in Africa cannot be resolved by speeches, studies and analyses that are never translated into action. We continue to believe that concrete action is needed to solve Africa's socio-economic problems.

The priority is to find a proper solution to the debt problem, which is hampering Africa's recovery. For it is clear that the debt burden is a major obstacle to development financing. That is why Togo continues to champion the idea of convening an international conference on Africa's external debt and supports the proposals on the debt question made at the Tokyo Conference of 5 and 6 October 1993.

My country is also concerned by the steady fall of commodity prices, which continues to deprive our countries of the resources they need for development financing. Justice dictates that our commodities be purchased at profitable prices. Togo is also in favour of the creation of a diversification fund for commodities, which would be a vital tool for supporting development.

From the standpoint of the increased liberalization of international trade, it is also important to lift protectionist measures that limit access by African products to world markets. In that connection, my delegation hopes that the conclusions of the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) will meet the expectations of developing countries in general and of Africa in particular.

The success of the New Agenda depends above all on the availability of sufficient internal and external financial resources. In that connection, my country appeals to the international community to make a greater contribution to African recovery through a substantial provision of capital.

It is by concerted, unified action that we can reach the goals of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

My delegation sincerely hopes that our assessment of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s will help spur the implementation of this programme, which is among the best the United Nations has ever set in motion to stimulate development in our continent.

As the Secretary-General has said,

> "The New Agenda for the Development of Africa is a new departure in international cooperation for development. It must yield results."

Let us therefore act together; let us take up the challenge. Let us not think that our speeches constitute action and our intentions deeds.

Mr. MUMBENGEGWI (Zimbabwe): Allow me to begin by expressing our appreciation to His Excellency Ambassador Elaraby of Egypt for his statement on behalf of the African States and to His Excellency Ambassador Jaramillo of Colombia for the statement he made on behalf of the Group of 77.

Let me express our sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General for the information before us in his report (A/48/334) on the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s; the report (A/48/336 and Corr.1) on the "Mobilization of additional resources for African economic recovery and development: a study on overall resource flows to Africa"; and the note (A/48/335 and Add.1) on the "Need for and feasibility of the establishment of a diversification fund for Africa's commodities". We have found the reports to be both analytical and comprehensive and, in that regard, they have greatly facilitated our consideration of this very important subject.

It would be well at this juncture to recall that when the General Assembly carried out a final review and appraisal of the ill-fated United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, the international community came to the sad but unequivocal conclusion that the Programme had failed to become the focal point for the recovery and sustained growth of our continent. A number of reasons were cited for this failure, among them such endogenous factors as institutional and infrastructural weaknesses, inadequate human resources, drought and protracted armed conflicts and political unrest which continued to affect some parts of the continent. Yet there were also some serious exogenous shortcomings which contributed to the failure of UNPAAERD, foremost among them the failure of Africa's bilateral and multilateral partners to provide the necessary financial resource flows on an adequate and assured basis, the crushing debt burden, a sharp decline in commodity prices on the world market and worsening terms of trade. It was for the primary reason of addressing and overcoming these very problems that the General Assembly adopted the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

Two years after the adoption of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa, can we truthfully say that this new compact has succeeded, even in the most modest of terms, where the 1986-1990 Programme so dismally failed? My delegation has studied carefully, and wishes to express its appreciation for, the actions which the United Nations system in particular, but also other actors, have taken so far in implementing the New Agenda. We commend the efforts of the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, particularly his initiative of establishing the Panel of High-level Personalities on African Development to assist and advise him on practical measures and options to advance the implementation of the New Agenda. We note that that Panel has already held two meetings within the space of six months to review some of the issues which are of very critical importance to the implementation of the New Agenda. We have also noted with appreciation the activities of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in this regard, particularly through the special programmes of the National Long-Term Perspective Studies and the African Capacity-Building Initiative and through intensified collaboration with the Organization of African Unity, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank. Our appreciation is also due the Government of Japan which, in collaboration with the United Nations and the Global Coalition for Africa successfully organized and hosted the recently concluded

Tokyo Conference on African Development. Indeed, the value of this initiative, and others of a similar nature, cannot be overemphasized.

Yet the numerous reports before this General Assembly clearly indicate that the situation in many African countries has not become better in the last two years, but has rather taken a turn for the worse. My delegation would indeed agree with the conclusion of the Administrator of UNDP in one of his recent reports on the role of UNDP in the implementation of the New Agenda that the New Agenda

> "... has so far failed to become the focal point for catalysing international and regional support for the continent's development". *(DP/1993/17, para. 4)*

When the New Agenda for the Development of Africa was adopted, it was universally recognized that a critical element in the support of the international community for Africa's own efforts was the provision of adequate resource flows. If I may recapitulate the agreement at that time, it was envisaged that, for African countries to achieve an average annual growth rate of real gross national product of at least 6 per cent in the 1990s, a minimum of $30 billion in net official development assistance would be required in 1992, after which real net official development assistance would need to grow at an average rate of 4 per cent per annum. It is dismaying to note in the Secretary-General's report on the mobilization of additional resources that

> "Since the beginning of the present decade, the net aggregate resource flows to Africa have declined and were 22 per cent lower in 1992 ... than in 1990". *(A/48/336 and Corr.1, para. 4)*

Indeed, that report places this parlous state of affairs in its proper context and perspective when it goes on to say:

> "The decline in the net aggregate resource flows in the 1990s seems to indicate that Africa has been bypassed". *(A/48/336 and Corr.1, para. 5)*

The Secretary-General also points out in his report on the implementation of the New Agenda (A/48/334) the anomalous situation in which

> "Although the international community has consistently expressed its full support for economic reforms in Africa that support has not been translated into adequate financial assistance". *(A/48/334, para. 31)*

Bilateral assistance to our continent in fact declined from $12 billion in 1990, when many of us embarked on the stabilization and structural-adjustment programmes, to $10.7 billion in 1991. What is even more ironic is the fact that, as stated in the 1993 *World Economic Survey* (E/1993/60 - ST/ESA/237), the only geographical region of the developing countries that had a negative transfer of resources in 1992 was Africa.

No new initiative, programme of action or strategy could possibly succeed in Africa if comprehensive measures are not taken urgently to address and solve the continent's excruciating debt problem. As has been clearly indicated in many recent reports, including those before us today, Africa has the highest ratios of debt to gross national product and debt to exports of all developing regions of the world: 100.1 per cent and 281.3 per cent, respectively. Such are the magnitude and crippling effects of the continent's external debt problem. We fully concur with the Secretary-General when he states that

> "Africa's debt issue cannot be dissociated from that of the resources necessary for the economic recovery and development of the region." *(A/48/334, para. 72)*

We would also wish to reiterate the urgent need for a new, comprehensive initiative covering all types of Africa's external debt: bilateral, multilateral and commercial. In that regard, we support the Secretary-General's proposals for further efforts on the part of the donor countries to arrive at a write-off of official-development-assistance debt, and for a substantial increase in net transfers from the multilateral financial institutions; we also agree with him that there is a need for an early start to commercial-debt-reduction-facility operations.

Another, interrelated, issue that is critical to Africa's recovery and development is that of the continent's terms of trade. According to the reports before us, there was a substantial fall in the terms of trade in a significant number of African countries in 1992, particularly as a result of falling commodity prices and lack of market access. As the report in document A/48/336 and Corr.1 illustrates, it has been estimated that a significant number of sub-Saharan African countries experienced net-trade-loss terms to the tune of $16.5 billion on the basis of 1990 exports, or the equivalent of 6.6 per cent of gross domestic product. On the whole, we are deeply concerned that Africa's share of world trade, accounting for only 2.1 per cent of global exports, has remained appallingly low in 1993. The aggregate effect of such an unsupportive international environment is known to all: poor savings and foreign exchange earnings, net outflow of resources, and a negative impact on the ability of the economic

reforms we are implementing to be effective in stimulating recovery and sustained growth.

As the report prepared by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, on behalf of the Secretary-General, on the need for and feasibility of the establishment of a diversification fund for Africa's commodities points out, most countries in the region rely on too few commodities for their export earnings, and the exports of these commodities have been stagnant and offer little prospect for growth. The reasons for such stagnation and the resultant losses in commodity-export earnings - reasons that include the lack of international market opportunities - are well articulated in the document.

The need for diversification of the commodities sector in Africa has once again been reiterated. My delegation is therefore gratified by and welcomes, as a first step, the Secretary-General's recommendation for the creation of a special facility within the African Development Bank for the financing of the pre-investment phase of commodity-diversification projects. It is our hope that in the long term, as initiatives such as this are put in place, concrete measures will be taken to stabilize Africa's terms of trade and to create market access to Africa's new diversified range of export commodities. In this regard, we would also reiterate the urgent need for an early, balanced, comprehensive and successful outcome of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations.

I now turn to an issue which is also closely linked to Africa's economic recovery and development. Nearly one and a half years after the conclusion of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992, many African countries have taken positive and determined measures to implement the programmes contained in Agenda 21. The interrelationship between environment, sustained economic growth and sustainable development, population and the eradication of poverty is clear and direct. We are deeply aware that poverty, characteristically manifested by the gross imbalance between population and available resources, is a major source of environmental degradation on the continent. Poverty has led to tremendous pressure on land resources, including forests, overgrazing and backward agricultural methods, all of which has resulted in deforestation, soil erosion and desertification.

As the Secretary-General points out in his report, fully aware of the need to halt and reverse these trends,

> "African countries have promoted environmental protection, individually or collectively, by the control of deforestation, the management of natural resources and the introduction of environment laws in the mining and industrial sectors". (*A/48/334, para. 40*)

While we remain committed to honouring our responsibilities under Agenda 21, it is clear that, as we have already stated, we cannot face this challenge alone. We are aware of the need to develop our national capacities in order to implement the programmes envisaged under Agenda 21. Yet for us to be able to do this there is a need for substantial new financial and technological resources. These will require international cooperation. In keeping with the spirit and commitments of Rio, we would call on the international community to lend its full support to Africa's efforts to ensure sustainable development with the provision of adequate new and additional financial resources and the transfer of and access to environmentally sound technologies on a concessional basis. Above all, we call for a free, open and unrestricted trade system and a supportive international economic environment.

Africa remains committed to the implementation of the New Agenda by scrupulous adherence to its side of the compact: greater popular participation, the creation of an enabling environment, the implementation of population and environment policies, and the promotion of subregional and regional economic cooperation and integration. We now call on the international community to renew its solidarity with the African continent.

Mr. THAKUR (India): I am speaking with pleasure and considerable optimism on agenda item 24, entitled "United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s". The critical economic situation in Africa has been on the agenda of the United Nations since the early 1980s. Even at that time, various agencies of the United Nations, including the Economic Commission for Africa, had sounded dire warnings that the economies of the African region were faced with the prognosis of stagnation or even a decline in the already unacceptable low levels of per capita and gross output.

It had been emphasized that such a situation should not and could not be allowed to continue. What emerged in reality was what has been aptly described by many as the "lost development decade". Alarmed at the continued adverse performance of African economies, the international community, at the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, adopted the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. Two years have since elapsed. We have today a useful opportunity to review the progress that has been made as well as to draw attention to the slippage that may have taken place.

I should like to draw attention to some of the elements in the New Agenda, which, in our view, embodies the emerging concepts of global partnership for development. The Agenda recognizes that the international community has a shared responsibility and a full partnership with Africa in supporting Africa's own efforts to achieve self-sustaining socio-economic growth and development. While committing the countries in Africa to undertake various economic reforms, it has also drawn attention to the necessary accompaniment in terms of a supportive international economic environment.

While paying attention, therefore, to encouraging investment promotion, protecting the environment, encouraging agricultural and rural development, food security and integrating population trends with development, it needs to be appreciated that the African economies need catalytic and sustaining support from external variables. These include additional resource flows, better terms of trade for commodities, diversification of production and trade, development of complementarities at the subregional and regional levels and enhanced foreign direct investment. Debt reduction and rescheduling also must be an inalienable part of this strategy.

A review of the socio-economic indicators pertaining to the economies in Africa makes it painfully clear that the results attained so far are still below not only expectations but even lower than the essential requirements. The structural adjustment measures being undertaken in several countries make it imperative that increased aggregate transfer of resources be ensured to enable the reforms to proceed. The adjustment programmes undertaken in many of these countries are still at a very fragile stage. They invariably entail social costs, sometimes to the point of threatening stability and in popular perception even challenging the very sustainability or desirability of the reform process. Going by the experience of my own country, in a major innovative attempt at restructuring our economy, we have set up a National Renewal Fund to meet the social costs. This has mitigated to some extent the social costs of transition. We initially dealt with the most vulnerable sections on a priority basis. Resource constraints have, however, affected somewhat the acceleration and deepening of the transition process with a human face.

Africa's economic recovery appears, unfortunately, still remote. The Secretary-General's report on "Mobilization of additional resources for African economic recovery and development: a study on overall resource flows to Africa" (A/48/336) has appropriately drawn attention to the need for enhanced private capital flows and foreign direct investment. There is a consensus that the considerable investment-savings gap must be filled by external resources. The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s had recommended a minimum of $30 billion in net official assistance in 1992, if an average annual growth of real gross national product of at least 6 per cent until the year 2000 is to be achieved. But the average annual inflow of foreign direct investment into Africa has come down from a level of $2.5 billion in the 1980s to $2 billion in the 1990s. The comparable figures for sub-Saharan Africa declined from $1.3 billion to $1 billion.

The picture on private loans is equally dismal. In fact, Africa's access to private loan flows became negative after 1990. Commercial loans and private investment now represent less than 5 per cent of resource flow to this region. The region also saw an adverse net transfer of financial flows.

It is quite obvious that, if the picture is to be altered on a long-term basis, the basic structure of production and trade must change. Diversification, expanding the resource base, value addition in production and so on have to be the essential components. The Secretary-General's report on the "Need for and feasibility of the establishment of a diversification fund for Africa's commodities" (A/48/335) has once again appropriately pointed out that a combination of rising indebtedness, rapid population growth, environmental degradation, political instability and civil strife, and over-dependence on a few primary commodities for export earnings, as well as a steep decline in their prices, have led to a long-term decline in per capita incomes.

It is disturbing indeed to note that there has also been a sharp deterioration in the nutritional situation in the region. In this context, I would like to draw attention to the recommendation made by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations that a diversification facility for African commodities be set up in the African Development Bank for an initial period of three to four years, with resources of roughly $50 million to $75 million.

The world community is aware that economies in Africa have also been affected adversely because of the shackles of colonialism and apartheid in South Africa. With the independence of a large number of African countries in the 1960s, the scourge of colonialism has to a large extent disappeared from the African continent. Apartheid, we hope, will soon come to an end in South Africa with the holding of elections in that country next April. The socio-economic disequilibrium created by such inhuman and uncivilized practices will, however, continue to affect the lives of a majority of the African population. It is of the utmost importance, therefore, that efforts for the

development of Africa should also address these socio-economic inequalities so that the people can enjoy equality in economic opportunity and social status along with political rights.

We applaud the efforts made by the Special Committee on decolonization and the Special Committee against Apartheid in generating a strong international movement to address these problems.

The support of India for the African freedom movements and for the efforts of the African countries to achieve sustainable economic growth is based on a deep commitment to our fundamental principles. It has manifested itself in tangible terms in the form of the Africa Fund, which was established at our initiative to provide project and other technical assistance to the front-line States in various areas, including human resource development and drought relief. By 1992, the Fund had disbursed up to $500 million in such assistance. Our cooperation with the Southern Africa Development Community is yet another expression of our desire to be an equal partner in the development efforts in Africa. We have participated actively in the economic development of Africa, *inter alia*, through our Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme, under which we have interacted with several countries in Africa through technical assistance in the form of execution of projects, extension of training facilities in India, designation of Indian experts, feasibility studies, providing consultancy services and organizing study visits. It is worth noting that more than 20,000 nominees from foreign countries, most of them from Africa, have been trained in India under this Programme.

Among the projects currently in hand are the setting up of a remote sensing centre in Nigeria, a vocational training programme centre in Senegal and several projects in Mauritius. We have offered training facilities in a wide range of fields such as banking, financial management, hydrology and water resources management, urban development, mass communication, fisheries, electronics, satellite image-processing, packaging, food processing, small industries, crop research, sericulture, bio-gas technology, manpower planning and training, and so on. In July 1991, India decided to send volunteers as part of its commitment to South-South cooperation to interact with other developing countries in their development programmes. It has been decided to initially send 50 special volunteers in this regard to 10 selected countries in Asia and Africa.

In conclusion, I should like to assert that consensus programmes for the economic development of Africa exist. We have the United Nations New Agenda. The Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries and the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade (1991-2000) also encompass the countries in the African region. Work is at present going on regarding an agenda for development. It is quite obvious that what is lacking is not a set of plans and programmes, but the ability and willingness to translate these into reality. The focus of our discussions and attention should therefore be on ways in which we can ensure the implementation of our commitments, undertaken with speed and efficiency.

Let me assure the Assembly that India remains firmly committed to lending its vigorous support to this endeavour.

Mr. ABIBI (Congo) *(interpretation from French)*: My delegation fully agrees with the statement made here on behalf of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) by the Ambassador of Egypt, and highly values the support given on behalf of the Group of 77 by the Ambassador of Colombia.

The critical situation affecting the economies of African countries weighs heavily on the consciences of us all and gives the present discussion on the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s a special dimension, in view of the expectations of thousands and thousands of human beings subjected to the trials of hunger, abject poverty and natural disaster on that continent.

Africa, while not trying to catch up with the others at any cost, needs to walk at their side, thanks to continuous progress in its economic development. But, as can be seen from the various studies and documents submitted for our consideration, the economic and social situation of most African countries has deteriorated.

The ever-growing debt burden, the gradual drop in official development assistance, the drying up of foreign capital, the deterioration in the terms of trade, the sharp population increase, repeated natural disasters, political instability, prolongedinternal conflicts and the deterioration of the environment are causing a situation which is threatening many African countries with the spectre of abject poverty and thereby dimming prospects for sustainable development in the continent, especially sub-Saharan Africa.

Africa's continued dwindling share of world markets reflects a clear gradual marginalization. In such a situation, the survival of Africa depends on its ability to

face up to all these challenges, both through its own efforts and through sustained international solidarity.

That is why the adoption of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s gave rise to so much enthusiasm in our countries, as a moral contract between our continent and the international community. It is certainly too soon to judge the results of this important solidarity pact. But already it would seem necessary to develop ever bolder measures so that the slight results we have seen here and there might be transformed into decisive action to begin a true economic takeoff for the continent. My delegation therefore supports unreservedly the plan to create a diversification fund for Africa's commodities, and hopes that the multilateral Uruguay Round of trade negotiations will be concluded very quickly so that the efforts made by African countries are not negated by an unbalanced system of trade which is still in effect internationally.

Congo today faces a situation of economic and financial bankruptcy resulting both from a disastrous policy pursued for more than two decades and the negative effect of external factors linked to the world crisis. The new economic policy that President Pascal Lissouba intends to implement is based on economic freedom and the freedom for all to be entrepreneurs, to create and innovate. It is based politically on democratization, which is to replace a single authority with pluralism, thereby ensuring the broadest possible participation in defining a policy for renewal and in its implementation.

In "liberating freedom", we hope that democracy will foster creativity, the source of innovation, and thereby safeguard the progress of the spirit of enterprise and job creation, bringing wealth to the nation and thus creating economic development. The establishment of a State governed by law, where the rule of law applies to all and where individual freedom in all its forms is respected and protected, is designed to create an institutional environment favourable to the development of private enterprise and the spread of civil society.

Some thoughts result from this plan. The first is that it is possible to build economic development and social progress by emphasizing initiative, individual creativity and civil society, combined with international assistance, an improvement in the terms of trade, foreign investment and limited State intervention in sectors coming within its purview, such as national infrastructures.

That was the objective of the workshop organized in Pointe Noire in 1992 on the subject "The management of innovation, creativity and the entrepreneurial spirit", which benefited from the contributions of many international experts from the United States of America, France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Côte d'Ivoire, Zaire and the Central African Republic. The symposium, *inter alia*, recommended the establishment of a financial company for innovation, a venture capital company, whose role would be to take over from conventional banks in financing innovative enterprises where the risk is real.

The second thought concerns the importance of human resources in facing up to the technological challenge which is certainly a limiting factor in the economic development of the continent. One major contributor to worsening the crisis in Africa is the fact that development no longer depends simply on the ability to invest in various essential areas of production, nor on the possession of raw materials; increasingly, it depends on the ability to manage these investments and to make use of scientific and technological information pertaining to them.

The existence of synthetics, simple or composite, with a concomitant decreasing call upon agricultural or mineral raw materials but without totally displacing the latter, has led to a collapse in the prices of African exports and therefore of African earnings. But African countries are heavily dependent on exports of raw materials, or semi-finished goods in the best of cases.

The survival of Africa today, therefore, requires an effort at endogenous creativity and subregional and regional economic integration, as well as a real ability to absorb foreign technologies for accelerated and sustained development.

In that connection the transfer of know-how can play a special role in giving impetus to many economic sectors. Fostering that kind of cooperation, the Government of the Congo recently proposed and the Parliament adopted an amendment to our nationality code to facilitate the naturalization of foreigners who have been working in our country in varied economic spheres and who may wish to take Congolese citizenship.

Obviously, crises are a constant phenomenon in the life of mankind, whether created by epidemics, endemics, famines, wars or natural disasters. However, at the threshold of the twenty-first century, should we still be expecting things to be settled by catastrophe? Today it is possible to answer "No," thanks to deliberate, responsible and concerted action on the part of all mankind.

Mr. HUARAKA (Namibia): My delegation would like first of all to take note of and support the statements made by the delegations of Egypt and Colombia on behalf of the African Group and the Group of 77, respectively.

The General Assembly, at its forty-sixth session, adopted the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in 1990s at its forty-sixth session with great optimism because it believed that it offered a good, comprehensive multilateral framework for addressing the diverse critical economic-development problems of the African continent. Today, along with others, the Namibian delegation is still convinced that the New Agenda can be a vehicle for ensuring that Africa is at the focus of attention in the United Nations throughout the 1990s. The New Agenda should act as a catalyst, giving political impetus and strength to the other developmental activities going on within and outside the African continent.

Mr. Kharazzi (Islamic Republic of Iran), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Africa's output grew by about 1.5 per cent in 1992 after a similar rate of growth in 1991. Per capita output declined once again, as has been the case since the early 1980s. In 1992 southern Africa and part of eastern Africa were severely ravaged by drought. In my own country alone, cereal production declined by more than 70 per cent. The drought increased pressure on the balance of payments because of higher food imports and lower exports, and on fiscal budgets as the result of relief programmes. Drought hit not only agriculture but also agricultural-processing industries and other manufacturers, either because water-generated electricity became more expensive and water scarcity affected the production processes requiring water, or because lack of water had a negative effect on the productivity of the labour force.

Thus, Namibia would like 1994 to be a year of renewed efforts and commitments to the effective implementation of the New Agenda by the international community. The efforts of African countries in their quest for growth and development will yield little if the international trading system does not allow exports from African countries access to the markets of the developed countries. If the world economy is not reformed to provide equity and fairness for all, our efforts will be futile.

It is quite clear that the Secretary-General has made serious efforts to ensure the successful implementation of the New Agenda. This is commendable. This, however, should be complemented with concrete and positive measures - by African countries, in particular, but by the rest of the international community as well - to secure growth and development on a sustained and sustainable basis on the African continent.

We are mindful of the need for Africa to diversify its primary commodities to stabilize or increase its export earnings in the face of the persistent fall in the prices of primary commodities and the continuous deterioration of the terms of trade. We in Namibia have committed ourselves to pursuing vigorously our responsibility and commitment under the New Agenda to achieve growth and development on a sustained and sustainable basis. We thus call upon the international community to provide us with the support to which we all committed ourselves in the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. There is an urgent need for the establishment of a diversification fund within the African Development Bank to assist in the preparation of commodity-diversification projects and programmes in Africa. Member States and multilateral organizations should contribute to that diversification facility with a view to making it operational as soon as possible.

The decline of financial-resource flows to Africa, which is the only continent experiencing a negative net transfer of resources in 1990s, is a matter of great concern to Africa. The provision of adequate resource flows to Africa is a critical element in the support from the international community. It is needed to contribute to achieving sustained real growth in per capita gross national product.

In the light of all that, my delegation appeals to the international community to increase financial resource flows to Africa, as these are crucial to regenerating the growth and sustainable development of the African economies and also to providing effective support to the political and economic reforms in which many African countries are now engaged and thus to helping cushion their severe social impact.

Mr. HUSLID (Norway): I am pleased to have an opportunity to speak on this subject, which is close to my heart.

I have the honour of making this statement on behalf of the Nordic countries - Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and Norway.

The Nordic countries welcome this first opportunity in the General Assembly to take part in an evaluation of and a debate on the implementation of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, which was adopted nearly two years ago. As is stated in its own text, the document constitutes a renewed commitment to Africa's development, based on the principle of shared

responsibility and full partnership between Africa and the international community. In this context, the Agenda defines the respective responsibilities of the African countries, the international community and the United Nations system.

The Nordic countries commend the Secretary-General's report contained in document A/48/334, which describes clearly the main features of the economic and social development, underlines some of the basic problems and points to the challenges ahead. We commend the Secretary-General for the personal interest that he has taken in these questions.

As for recent development, it has to be recognized that, on the whole, it is far from satisfactory. The report summarizes the situation by stating:

> "To varying degrees, as they did in the 1980s, African countries have entered the 1990s with multifaceted crises in such major areas as food security, population, housing, public health, education, energy, industrial production, trade, debt and environment." *(A/48/334, para. 52)*

It should be noted that during the first three years of the present decade the internal domestic product of the region grew at an average rate of only 2.1 per cent per annum. With an average annual population growth of about 3 per cent, this means that per capita income continued to fall. There is no doubt that the extremely rapid population growth represents a great challenge to African countries. This matter too is mentioned in the report.

However, the rather unsatisfactory overall figures that are quoted hide large differences in economic performance, and it can be noted with satisfaction that several countries, which are implementing economic and social reforms with determination, have recorded satisfactory growth figures. Still, it is a regrettable fact that forecasts made by the World Bank and by others indicate that the number of people in Africa living in absolute poverty - Africa being the only region of the world of which this is true - will have increased from some 85 million in 1985 to a projected 265 million in the year 2000.

This unfortunate situation calls for concrete action - first and foremost, by the countries of Africa themselves, but also by the world community, which, according to the New Agenda, has promised full and tangible support for the African effort.

Time obliges me to be rather selective in dealing with initiatives and measures to address the challenges facing Africa. Permit me, on behalf of the Nordic countries, to point to several sectors - starting with the important question of debt.

We know that sub-Saharan Africa is still plagued by severe external indebtedness. On average, contractual debt-service charges in low-income Africa amount to a staggering 80 per cent of annual export income. There will be very little comfort in stabilizing, or even slightly declining, debt-service ratios so long as arrears continue to pile up. Although countries' circumstances differ quite substantially, we are faced in many cases with a most serious mismatch between debt-service obligations and capacity to make payments. It is equally clear that official development assistance can never fill the financing gaps and thus solve the problem. We must, therefore, attack the African debt overhang head-on - and we must do so fast. If Africa enters the next century still caught in a quagmire of massive external debt, the effect will be truly disastrous.

Against this background, the Nordic countries welcome the recent recognition by several Paris Club creditors that a number of the severely indebted countries need debt relief that goes well beyond the present 50 per cent. We welcome also the fact that the stock-of-debt approach has been put firmly on the Paris Club's agenda. In the case of the poorest African countries in particular, there is an acute need for such measures. Provided that those African countries are committed to economic reforms and structural adjustment, the Nordic countries remain willing to grant them stock-of-debt reduction of up to 80 per cent. We urge the Paris Club to move fast on this pressing issue. Early action is badly needed, and exceptional flexibility is called for; and creditors outside the Paris Club should follow suit.

Moreover, the best possible use must be made of a number of existing multilateral mechanisms that have proved themselves highly useful to African countries. The recently replenished International Development Association debt-reduction facility - the so-called sixth dimension - which facilitates secondary market buy-backs of private bank debts, must be fully utilized. In the International Monetary Fund (IMF), a new, enhanced structural-adjustment facility must be agreed upon before the end of this year, and the concessional element must be no less than that in the present scheme. The IMF's rights accumulation programme for clearance of arrears might also need refinement or, at least, some sort of follow-up. Moreover, donor countries should consider contributing to the World Bank's fifth dimension, which now subsidizes, by as much as 90 to 100 per cent, the bank-interest dues of International Development Association countries, many of which are African. Bilateral grants could facilitate increased coverage of parts of the principal repayments as well.

As regards financing, the Nordic countries have found the World Bank's Special Programme of Assistance (SPA) for low-income, debt-stressed sub-Saharan African countries to be a very successful coordination mechanism for supporting the economic-reform process in Africa. Currently, the Programme provides quick-disbursing balance-of-payments support to 27 poor and debt-distressed African countries that are undertaking comprehensive economic-reform programmes. The Nordic countries have supported the programme since it was launched in 1987, and we welcome the fact that bilateral donors, together with the United Nations Development Programme, the African Development Bank and the World Bank, agreed recently to launch a third phase of the SPA, covering the period 1994-96.

The Nordic countries also participate actively and constructively in the ongoing replenishment negotiations for the African Development Fund. Given the great needs for concessional resources in Africa, the African Development Fund plays a crucial role as a channel for such resources to the continent.

The Nordic countries wish to draw the attention of this Assembly to the Tokyo Conference on African Development held in October this year. This Conference and the Tokyo Declaration on African Development represent, in our opinion, a significant step in the work of strengthening an emerging new partnership for sustainable development in Africa, and that is well in line with the Agenda.

We fully agree with the Tokyo Declaration on the importance of the process of simultaneous political and economic reform, the necessity of private sector participation in domestic economic activity and the particular importance of promoting regional cooperation in Africa, while at the same time learning from the valuable development experiences in successful Asian countries.

The Nordic countries have also actively supported the Global Coalition for Africa (GCA), with, as we know, both African and non-African participation. Launched only a few years ago, the GCA was and continues to be an important policy initiative providing support for Africa and a forum for equal partnership between African countries and donors. We are satisfied that GCA takes a keen interest in a number of the important issues addressed by the international agenda, that is, the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

We welcome the concentration of future GCA activities on the highest priority issues such as democracy and good governance, the enhancement of economic reform measures, regional integration, and agricultural policy reform. The Global Coalition for Africa can make an important contribution if activities are properly coordinated with other policy initiatives and international organizations. The Nordic countries would like the GCA to take an even more active role in exploring the linkage between political and economic reform and the conditions for a sustained democratization process in Africa.

It goes without saying that the United Nations system must continue to play an important role in the implementation of the New Agenda. Time does not permit me to comment in any further detail on this action, which should, I would emphasize, draw on all United Nations programmes as well as on the specialized agencies. It is important, as stated in the Secretary-General's report, that there be adequate coordination among the various policies and programmes within the system so as to increase efficiency. In this context, the machinery of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, under the able leadership of the Secretary-General himself, should be used to its fullest extent.

Let me, in conclusion, make some comments on the very important subject of diversification. The Nordic countries have studied with great interest the note by the Secretary-General entitled "Need for and feasibility of the establishment of a diversification fund for Africa's commodities" (A/48/335). This document gives a useful description of the economic situation in Africa, and it paints a rather gloomy picture of today's situation and the future perspectives for most of the African countries. On the other hand, the note points out the possibilities and potential for diversification. We know that several African countries have undertaken considerable efforts to reform their economies, and this despite considerable social costs.

The Nordic countries agree with the statement in the report that the responsibilities for diversification will rest first and foremost with the national authorities and that mobilization of national resources is a key element in the diversification process. We do, however, realize that many countries are in need of external assistance to complement their national efforts. Such assistance is today being provided through bilateral channels and multilateral institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the African Development Bank and the Common Fund. In addition, technical assistance in the field of diversification is provided by a number of other programmes and organizations within the United Nations system. But the report argues that the resources allocated for diversification measures are inadequate, and that there is thus a need to establish a new facility within the African Development Bank for this purpose.

The Nordic countries are strongly committed to supporting the African countries in their diversification process. We think, however, that the issue of diversification needs to be seen in a wider context and should not be defined too narrowly. Successful diversification is linked to structural adjustment policies, good governance, an enabling environment for private investments, existing infrastructure, and policies for human resource development. Thus the Nordic countries would have appreciated a more integrated approach in the report regarding diversification measures.

This having been said, the Nordic countries will, however, continue to consider the report and, together with other countries, take part in the discussion on this important subject.

The New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s constitutes a challenge for Africa, for the world community and for the United Nations system. The Nordic countries will take their part in meeting this challenge.

The preceding was my intervention on behalf of the Nordic countries. Before I leave this rostrum, permit me just briefly and personally, as Chairman of the committee that negotiated the New Agenda two years ago, to try to give at least a partial answer to the question that I have heard asked several times today by speakers here, which is with some variation more or less as follows: What has the Agenda led to? What has been its result? It is a good and pertinent question, and not one that is easy to answer. But maybe it would be useful for us all to try to realize what this Agenda can do and also what this Agenda cannot do.

The Agenda is first and foremost, we should bear in mind, a political document. It is not a perfect document, as it is a compromise hammered out more or less during an all-night session in September 1991; and it is not a panacea that can solve the problems of Africa. The Agenda does, however, contain some important principles and goals which have been adopted by both Africa and the world community through consensus in this General Assembly.

One of those principles is that of shared responsibility and full partnership. Another is that of giving full and tangible support to African efforts. Yet another goal is that of 6 per cent growth per annum.

These are goals and principles that cannot be implemented as though they were Security Council sanctions; they can and should, however, serve as points of reference and political obligations for action both within the United Nations system and outside it. As such, they should serve as inspiration and impetus for practical action, both multilateral and bilateral.

Used in that manner, I would think the Agenda could serve a very useful purpose all through the 1990s, during which, as we know, the United Nations will come back to it several times. But we must remember that it is up to us all to implement and keep alive those principles, to which we have all subscribed.

Mr. ABDELLAH (Tunisia) *(interpretation from French)*: The Tunisian delegation has a number of comments to make on agenda item 24, "United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s".

Let me begin by welcoming the international community's interest in the difficult economic situation that has prevailed in Africa for several decades. The United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 was an expression of United Nations commitment to African development. That agreement between the States of Africa and the United Nations was the first of its kind; it has now been supplemented by the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, which reflects a renewed United Nations commitment to support African development efforts. For all our States, it is an act of faith and a sign of hope that sustains our decisions despite the uncertainties of the international situation and the difficulties of the moment.

We should recall that the African economic and social crisis of the 1980s, which persisted throughout that decade, has not yet come to an end in vast areas of the continent. Combined with prolonged drought, this situation could not but lead to social upheaval undermining the already vulnerable stability of countries many of which had grown extremely fragile.

Those endogenous factors, themselves destabilizing, were compounded by the international situation and its raft of difficulties. Deteriorating terms of trade, the crushing weight of debt servicing, stagnating - even diminishing - flows of external resources, are only the most striking of the common hardships of the countries of Africa. In that hostile context, African countries had to adopt policies to reverse the negative trend and to put their devastated economies in order.

To that end, stabilization and structural-adjustment programmes sponsored by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank were put in place by virtually all of our countries. Economically restrictive and socially costly, the programmes of reform and structural adjustment on which our countries have courageously and far-

sightedly embarked have still failed to achieve the expected results.

In that context, I wish to refer to one of the reports of the Secretary-General on this item, document A/48/336 and Corr.1, entitled "Mobilization of additional resources for African economic recovery and development". We read in that document that more than 30 African countries have undertaken vigorous structural-adjustment programmes. We also read that each year the gap between the developed countries and Africa is widening. Even worse, the gap between Africa and other developing regions is also growing. In that connection, I would recall that in 1981, 21 of the least-developed countries were found in Africa; in 1991 that number rose to 32.

Continuing its analysis, the report of the Secretary-General indicates that Africa's access to international financing is becoming increasingly limited. In the future the continent will also have to face increased competition by some 20 countries of other regions, countries also eligible to receive such financing.

Yet, at a time when there is a consensus that the human being should be the end and the means in the service of peace, security, progress and development, economic growth in Africa has not kept up with population growth: there has been no improvement in the standard of living of the most severely disadvantaged groups. The greatest challenge facing Africa today is to eradicate poverty and resume growth - which is necessary to ensure the development of the countries of the continent and the well-being of their peoples.

Hence, Tunisia considers it urgent that complementary measures be considered by the international community with a view to reversing the trend and attracting financing to the African continent to enable our countries to return to the path of growth and to guarantee our peoples the well-being to which they aspire.

To that end, in our view, the solution of the African debt problem must be the cornerstone of any endeavour to help our countries break their dependency and enable our continent to play its proper role on the international scene, both politically and in the areas of trade and economic activity.

My country, which through the last decade constantly advocated at the highest level this approach, also welcomes today the guidelines and the programme of action prepared by the United Nations in the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, particularly with regard to the thorny problem of debt.

In this regard, I wish once again to refer to the report of the Secretary-General on this question, which notes that

> "There is now a common agreement among African countries, the international community and international organizations that Africa's debt issue cannot be dissociated from that of financial resources necessary for the economic recovery and development of the continent." *(A/48/336, para. 56)*

The same document goes on to say,

> "... it is the right time for a new initiative on Africa's debt". *(ibid.)*

The strategy thus adopted fully meets our concerns, as it covers all categories of external debt - bilateral, multilateral and commercial.

Another question my delegation wishes to address here relates to Africa's responsibility and commitment in the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa. On this point allow me to recall in particular the results of the recent Tokyo International Conference on African Development, which took place on 5 and 6 October this year. That important event, in which my country participated, afforded the participants from Africa the opportunity to reaffirm solemnly the primary responsibility of the Governments and the peoples of our continent in the development of our respective countries.

The Tokyo Declaration on African Development, entitled "Towards the 21st Century", thus renewed the commitment of African States to pursue and carry out structural-transformation policies for their economies, a deeper implantation of democracy in their societies and improvements in the management of their local resources.

The President returned to the Chair.

The Tokyo Conference was also an opportunity for developed-country partners to confirm their commitment to supporting efforts made by Africa in its development process. As the diversification of African economies is one of the priorities underscored in the New Agenda to help the continent emerge from dependency on commodity exports, the Tunisian delegation hopes that the avowed support of our developed-country partners will henceforth materialize in their contribution to the establishment of a diversification fund for Africa.

In conclusion, the Tunisian delegation wishes to touch on the subject of South-South cooperation, which is one of the points that Africa has emphasized in its commitment to

the New Agenda. In this respect I am pleased to recall that Tunisia had the honour and privilege to organize last month, in cooperation with the Organization of African Unity and the Arab League, the first Arab-African Trade Fair. The Fair, which was a concrete step towards cooperation between the Arab and African communities, to both of which we belong, took place in Tunis from 22 to 29 October 1993.

This important example of South-South cooperation happily coincided with the Twelfth Conference of African Trade Ministers, held in Tunis on 23 and 24 October. These two events thus enabled our economic officials and decision-makers to compare their experiences and to emphasize the necessary strengthening of intraregional and interregional South-South exchanges. The documents and resolutions adopted by the African Ministers at the conclusion of their meeting reaffirmed this fundamental approach.

The approach adopted by the African Trade Ministers in this connection is in consonance with the recommendations of a new order with regard to South-South cooperation. We hope the treaty for the creation of the African Economic Community, signed in June 1991 in Abuja, can soon become operational through concrete actions.

As to our subregion, the Maghreb, my country's delegation cannot fail to express its satisfaction at the achievements of the five States members of the Arab Maghreb Union on the road to complementarity. The many treaties and agreements today in force attest to a promising dynamic that will lead to the Arab Maghreb Union's recognition as a regional partner both in our continent and in the Mediterranean and Arab contexts.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): At the recently held Tokyo International Conference on African Development, the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), describing the poorest of the poor, referred to

> "the face of a young mother escaping with her child from war, hunger and deprivation somewhere in Africa".

This face appears on the cover of every journal and on every television screen; it arouses great sympathy. Unfortunately, we have yet to translate this sympathy into concerted international action to avert the growing human suffering and mounting social upheaval in Africa.

In Africa last year, gross domestic product grew by only 1.5 per cent. This was half the rate of the continent's population growth. For the majority of the African countries, gross domestic product declined by 1.1 per cent.

All other major economic indicators are similarly sombre. The savings rates in African countries continue to decline, and the least developed among them are heavily dependent on external financial resources. At the same time, official development assistance flows for sub-Saharan Africa declined by 22 per cent for 1992. Private flows are concentrated on only a few African countries. Africa has been virtually bypassed in the competition for foreign direct investment.

The debt burden remains onerous for most African countries, despite the cancellations by certain donors of a part of their official debt. Further efforts for amelioration of official debt, both bilateral and multilateral, are essential.

Africa's export earnings have also stagnated. There has been a continuous decline in the terms of trade of the 25 sub-Saharan countries. It is estimated that between 1990 and 1992, they suffered a trade loss of $16.5 billion due to such deterioration in the terms of trade. The setback, due to slack commodity prices, is aggravated by protectionism. As the Secretary-General's report states:

> "It has been estimated that developing countries lose about $100 billion a year in export revenues as a result of market barriers in developed countries, or almost twice the [official development assistance] (ODA) that developed countries provide. As a result, taxpayers in the developed countries pay both for economic assistance and for costlier imports, while developing countries lose more in trade than they gain in aid. Compared with the massive terms of trade losses, net increases in ODA to the sub-Saharan countries averaged only $2.5 billion ... between 1980 and 1990. This is one of the incoherences in policies toward the developing world". (*A/48/336, para. 16*)

Since 1985, Africa's share of trade has fallen to under 2 per cent of world trade. The special arrangements made under the Lomé Convention for many African and other low-income countries have so far proved insufficient to respond to their goals of economic diversification, industrialization and export expansion.

Clearly, Africa is becoming increasingly marginalized in the world economy. The New Agenda for the Development of Africa recognized that positive change and recovery in the African economic crisis required both national and international support. While stressing that Africa's development is primarily the responsibility of Africans, the world community made a commitment to

give full and tangible support to African efforts. It is clear that the States of Africa cannot succeed in meeting the challenges they confront unless they receive external financial assistance and strengthened international efforts are made to create a global economic climate conducive to African development efforts. The New Agenda set out the priority objectives of the African countries, which are the accelerated transformation, integration, diversification and growth of their economies to integrate them in the world economy, reduce their vulnerability to external shocks, increase their dynamism and enhance their self-reliance.

Africa's commitment to the New Agenda is reflected in the reform measures instituted in economic management, exchange rates, public enterprises, population planning and the agricultural sector, despite the often high political, social and economic costs of such measures. The people of Africa have borne the sacrifices involved with courage and dignity. They rightly expect that their personal impoverishment will now end and that genuine international economic cooperation will lead to national revitalization and recovery.

Africa has shown great seriousness in keeping its part of the bargain under the New Agenda. Most African countries continue to pursue policies of reform and structural adjustment designed to improve their economic performance and to pave the way for sustained growth and development. Despite earnest efforts to carry out structural adjustments in their national economic policies, most African countries have found little reprieve from the unfavourable external economic environment, harsh climatic conditions, civil war and strife.

The adverse effects of domestic and external resource constraints on African productivity have outweighed the positive impact of policy reforms. On the other hand, the international community has not been as forthcoming as anticipated in fulfilling its part of the compact. We are fast losing the initiative taken in 1991 to deal with the African crisis. It is most disturbing that 85 million people are projected to be added to the number of those living in abject poverty in Africa.

Can the international community stand back and watch in silence as hunger, deprivation, pain and misery continue to haunt a proud people that suffers so many indignities through no fault of its own? How many States are we willing to watch fail before we mobilize the collective political will to overcome the problems of economic stagnation and social disruption which lie at the root of the multiple crises we confront on the great continent of Africa?

As the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund stated at the Tokyo international Conference:

> "The international community must fulfil its commitment in three ways: by providing access to markets for African exports; by extending technical assistance; and by providing financial assistance."

The prescriptions are clear: what we need is action by the world community.

Pakistan is a developing country. We ourselves confront many challenges. We have succeeded in ensuring a fairly encouraging rate of economic growth despite these challenges. One of the principles of our external relations is to promote cooperation and solidarity with other developing countries. In this spirit, Pakistan has established an Africa Programme for the promotion of cooperation with the States of that great continent. This cooperation is being pursued in multifarious ways. Hundreds of young Africans train in Pakistan in various fields each year. Hundreds of Pakistani doctors, engineers and other professionals participate in Africa's development process. The possibilities for technical cooperation under this Programme are open to all our African brothers. We look forward to enlarging this Programme to respond in a modest way to the challenges and needs of Africa - a continent which we are certain will succeed in the battle for economic and social development because of the courage and sacrifices of its peoples and, we hope, the solidarity of the world community.

Mr. MUTHAURA (Kenya): At its forty-sixth session, the General Assembly in resolution 46/151 adopted the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s to serve as a catalyst, giving political impetus and strength to other activities within and outside Africa for the mobilization of international support in favour of the continent. The New Agenda recognizes Africa's vast potential in both the material and the human resources necessary for growth and sustainable development. It also recognizes the fact that the primary responsibility for its implementation lies with the African Governments themselves. These efforts must, however, be complemented by the international community through multilateral and bilateral assistance.

Africa's responsibility and commitment in the implementation of the programmes of the New Agenda cover a wide range of areas. They include regional economic cooperation and integration; intensification of the democratization process; creation of a climate conducive to attracting foreign investments; adoption of a people-centred development; protection of the environment; pursuit of

strategies targeted at achieving food security; and eradication of poverty, disease and illiteracy in the continent.

The international community, on the other hand, committed itself to assisting Africa in the solution of the debt problem; the provision of adequate resource flows for development and investments; the diversification of primary commodities; the lifting of trade barriers in favour of Africa's exports; and support for regional economic integration. The United Nations has a central role to play in the coordination of the implementation of the Agenda programmes, especially as they relate to the Second United Nations Industrial and Transport and Communications Decade for Africa.

The crisis which began in Africa in the 1980s has continued into the 1990s, and the prospects for economic recovery are still remote despite the prevailing signs of modest growth in the world economy. African countries are experiencing an increasing debt burden, rapid population growth, recurring droughts, encroaching desertification, environmental degradation, overdependence on a few primary commodities for export earnings, deteriorating terms of trade and the negative effects of structural adjustment programmes.

The decline in the performance of the economies of African countries is well documented in the various United Nations records. For instance, agriculture, the backbone of African economies, has grown by only 2.3 per cent per annum on the average in the last three decades, a rate below that of population growth. At the same time, the prices of export commodities have been fluctuating since 1980. By last year the real export prices of coffee and cacao had fallen 69 per cent, palm oil by 49 per cent and sisal and cotton by 47 per cent from the beginning of the 1980s.

At the same time, the increase in resource flows to Africa was marginal, from $15.8 billion in 1985 to $18.4 billion in 1992, according to World Bank figures for 49 indebted African countries. According to the same source, the aggregate net long-term financial transfer to Africa declined from $7.2 billion in 1985 to $5.3 billion in 1992.

The African countries continue to make every effort to live up to their commitments as contained in the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. In recent years, they have made tremendous efforts to maintain the momentum for development despite the decline in external resource flows. They have also created the necessary political and economic climate to attract foreign investments and to diversify their economies with a view to expanding their export base. However, the recent trend whereby investment resources are being diverted to other regions of the world is a matter of concern to African countries, since this is likely to lead to marginalization of the continent and a drying up of direct investment capital.

As regards investments, Kenya supports the establishment of the proposed diversification fund for Africa's commodities. The proposal, as contained in document A/46/335, reveals that the proposed fund should be accorded a high priority. Kenya is of the view that in addressing the issue of the diversification of commodities, account should be taken of the need to promote both horizontal and vertical diversification to ensure that the products are given greater value-added through processing, marketing, distribution and transportation. This approach calls for substantial investments and the transfer of appropriate technology to African countries to achieve that objective.

African countries are implementing far-reaching structural adjustment programmes to achieve sustainable development. In the short term, these programmes can have profoundly negative social and economic effects in terms of production, employment, health, education and housing, to mention but a few. African countries implementing economic reforms are increasingly finding themselves unable to provide adequate health care, equip their schools or provide a social safety net to the poor. This situation is exacerbated by the debt burden, declining commodity prices, dwindling external assistance, deteriorating terms of trade, balance of payments problems, frequent droughts resulting in food shortages, and the influx of refugees owing to some of the conflicts on the African continent.

African countries have established subregional and regional economic cooperation arrangements intended to achieve self-reliance and integration in the continent and to supplement North-South cooperation. These arrangements include the Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern Africa, the Economic Community of West African States, the Arab Maghreb Union and the Southern Africa Development Community. They are already yielding tangible economic benefit for their member countries, and they will lead to the eventual achievement of the African Economic Community. The arrangements require the continued support of the international community so that they may contribute to sustainable regional integration and development.

New developments have taken place within the United Nations since the adoption of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. Last

year, the international community adopted Agenda 21 in Rio de Janeiro, which, *inter alia*, incorporates environment into the development process. Africa is prone to environmental problems such as desertification, drought, soil erosion and deforestation. To this end, African countries should benefit from the additionality of resources and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies for the implementation of Agenda 21. African countries also look forward to the successful elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa, by June next year.

In conclusion, Kenya believes that the political will that led to the adoption of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s must be backed by the necessary means. The United Nations is best suited to coordinate implementation of the various programmes of the Agenda. In this regard, the various United Nations specialized agencies and programmes should be adequately equipped with financial resources and personnel to support programmes and projects in their respective areas and sectors.

Mr. GERVAIS (Côte d'Ivoire) *(interpretation from French)*: In its follow-up machinery, the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s provided for the carrying out by the General Assembly this year of a preliminary review of the progress of the Agenda, which followed on the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. My delegation would like to take the opportunity offered by the discussion of this agenda item to make some comments on the difficult economic situation in Africa.

In briefly recalling the record of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, the Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Economic and Social Development, Mr. Ji Chaozhu, said in introducing this new agreement:

> "Since 1986, the General Assembly has annually addressed the various aspects of the execution of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development and has repeatedly expressed concern at the slow rate of progress. Regrettably, at the end of 1990, it became clear that the economic crisis in Africa had worsened and that the international community would have to make even greater efforts. It should be noted in this respect that the African countries in the period 1986-1990 undertook far-reaching political and economic reforms which will assist the international community in providing support and in fulfilling its commitments to the continent."

Therefore we can say that the economic situation in Africa has steadily worsened in the course of the last decade. Today the distressing fact is that of the 47 least developed countries, 32 are in Africa. Of the 173 countries classified in the last United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report on human development, 41 of the 53 African countries on the list are in the bottom 50 of the classification.

The external debt of African countries is today proportionally the highest in the world; debt servicing represents on average 32 per cent of export earnings; their economies are the least diversified; the deterioration in terms of trade, primarily associated with the abnormally low prices of commodities, continues to undermine the structural adjustment endeavours of almost all African countries, endeavours with extremely burdensome social and political consequences for countries already penalized by unprecedented circumstances in their history.

In the social area in particular the rise - I might even say the general spread - of unemployment is the greatest threat to peace and social cohesion. The demands of management, which often pays very little attention to the human dimension, and the slow-down in the creation of jobs, have resulted in a marked worsening in general living conditions for the peoples concerned and by growing impoverishment. Such a situation has a negative impact on education, health and social protection for women and children, and imperils the chances of a return to economic growth, which is at the same time the goal of structural adjustment.

On the political level the goal of democratization seems elusive because economic and social conditions are not improving, not to mention the endeavours to safeguard the world's environment and the effort to promote respect for human rights in a context dominated by poverty, climatic fluctuations and the political uncertainties that such poverty generates.

If we take the view these days that human rights include the right to development, why should we not consider the right to nutrition, the right to better living conditions to be fundamental human rights? Following the World Conference on Human Rights which took place in Vienna in June this year it would be desirable for the international community to turn its attention to these aspects of development and for the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s to incorporate them among its principles.

In addition to national programmes the New Agenda for the Development of Africa does, it is true, offer an appropriate framework established in agreement with the

international community, which sets out to sustain Africa's development. It is a matter for concern that two years after the adoption of the Agenda little progress has been made in putting it into effect. We believe that we need to look for the reasons for this and take measures to make the New Agenda effective while there is still time, for it should not be allowed, like its predecessor, to remain a dead letter.

Our countries are only too well aware of the importance of economic and social development. They are also aware of the need to make their own efforts to restore growth. With this in mind, and by making heavy sacrifices, they have accepted the principles of the structural adjustment policy. But in order to achieve their aims they are aware of the need for assistance from Africa's partners without which it would be impossible to escape marginalization.

In this context it might perhaps be appropriate, in order to be in a position to carry out an objective review midway through or at the end of the Agenda, to envisage convening a meeting to assess the commitments of the developed countries where the readiness to assist Africa would this time be expressed in concrete terms and by specific political commitments. Assistance for the development of Africa can no longer be reduced to the preparation of texts of projects, however well written they may be. It would seem to us to be equally necessary for the programme budget of the United Nations to reflect in a proper fashion the proposals of the new agreement. Each United Nations body involved in cooperation for the development of Africa should also prepare a clear table of its commitments to the programme for the consideration of the Economic and Social Council, thus highlighting the additional resources which would reflect the reality of the needs and priorities defined in the programme.

My delegation would like at this point to thank the Secretariat and the various institutions that took part in the preparation of the reports placed before us for our consideration.

Document A/48/334 paints a clear picture of the international economic context and spells out once again the priorities concerned while assessing the possibilities for international assistance.

In this respect one should recall the extent to which official development assistance and financial inputs on favourable conditions are necessary for the African countries that have been hard hit by the economic crisis. Despite the difficulties being encountered by the developed countries it is desirable to increase the resources going to African countries for their development. Africa knows that its present state of poverty is not predestined. It will recover one day and will reward properly those who have been able to assist it and remained constant in their concern.

In this respect we welcome the initiatives taken to promote the New Agenda for the Development of Africa. We are grateful to the Secretary-General for setting up a Panel of High-level Personalities on African Development and appointing a Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries. We hope that their hard work and their commitment to make the new agreement a reality will be an opportunity for concrete action that will benefit Africa.

In the same context we are grateful to the Japanese Government for its initiative in convening the Tokyo Conference on African Development a few weeks ago. The Tokyo Declaration is one more commitment which attests to the care and concern that Africa today so sorely needs.

With respect to document A/48/335 on the need for the establishment of a diversification fund for Africa's commodities, I should like to underline the prestige and importance of the agencies that took part in its preparation jointly with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO): the African Development Bank, the African Project Development Facility, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the World Bank, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and many others. Despite the modest level of this diversification fund - only $70 million for the whole of Africa - we would none the less wish to thank them and hope that this will be only the first step.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to reaffirm that the international community must reject the idea of marginalizing any part of our world. Never have we had such a good opportunity to demonstrate solidarity, and we must seize it now by giving specific commitments. The last three decades have clearly taught us about the plight of Africa. Hence we hope the time has come for fruitful action.

Mr. ISAKOV (Russian Federation) *(interpretation from Russian):* The Russian Federation takes a sympathetic view of the complex problems now facing the African countries and is prepared to help in their solution, both on a bilateral basis and in the context of broad international efforts. Of special importance in this respect

is the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

I must be blunt and say that at present Russia's capacity to provide assistance is limited, because of the problems that the country is facing during a transitional period. However, we have no doubt that the successful resolution of these problems will open up fundamentally new possibilities for mutually advantageous cooperation with all countries - including, of course, African countries - as well as for Russia's early return to the ranks of donor countries.

World-wide experience has demonstrated convincingly that where normal conditions for trade, investment, cooperation and the implementation of other forms of mutually advantageous economic ties exist, economic development proceeds apace, and in the final analysis conditions are created for a rise in people's living standards. Despite the importance - in some cases, the indispensability - of external assistance, the most effective way to solve a country's economic and social problems is to mobilize its internal resources, making use of the entire arsenal of effective means of securing mutually advantageous international economic cooperation.

We note with satisfaction that that is the approach in several of the conclusions of the reports (A/48/334 and A/48/336) of the Secretary-General that are before us. In particular, paragraph 50 of document A/48/336 states that with the creation in recent years by a number of African countries of favourable conditions for foreign investment, better prospects now exist for attracting enhanced inflow. As is pointed out in paragraph 3, external finance is an important source of economic growth. The same ideas are set out in paragraph 70 of document A/48/334.

Russia, for its part, is prepared to step up, and to put on a new basis, its economic ties with African countries. Of course, we expect to be met half way. We expect from the other side equal willingness to solve these problems, which have accumulated over the years.

One problem is the great indebtedness of a number of African countries to the Russian Federation. Well aware of the complexity of these problems, we feel that there must be joint search for innovative approaches to their solution, including use of the accumulated experience of the world community.

It would seem that it is now especially important that trade and economic relations between Russia and African countries be organized in such a way that the debt problem will not impede the development of mutually advantageous cooperation. In particular, Russia is prepared to consider various types of debt-equity swaps with African countries - transfers to the equity of national enterprises of debtor countries - and so on. This would be a means of solving a double-edged problem - reducing African countries' debt to Russia and, at the same time, securing the creditor's direct participation in the efforts to revive their economies. The advisability of such approaches is mentioned in paragraph 72 of document A/48/336, which says that debt-equity swaps are useful in this regard. The effectiveness of such measures in combination with privatization programmes is mentioned.

We feel that these factors should be adequately reflected in a new, comprehensive strategy for the settlement of African debt - bilateral, multilateral and commercial. The need for such a strategy is rightly mentioned in paragraph 56 of that report.

In our view, paragraph 73 is correct in what it says about the need for the international community to take measures to support the efforts being made by the African countries themselves to attract foreign investment. The Government of Russia has given the green light to investment activity by Russian entrepreneurs in African countries. We believe that these and other measures can raise our economic relations with those countries, as with other developing countries, to a qualitatively new level.

In talking about the important possibilities of the economic recovery of Africa, one cannot fail to mention the need for reduced military expenditures by African countries themselves. Unfortunately, there has been no real movement in this area in recent years, as is mentioned in document A/48/336. We feel that there is a need for further serious work on the idea - expressed in paragraph 73 of document A/48/334 - that the task of democratizing Africa and, in broader terms, of securing the general economic and social development of the continent is inseparably linked to solving the problem of reducing the military expenditures of several African countries.

In general, we feel that, from the point of view of the need to seek new approaches to the solution of Africa's economic problems, the conclusions and recommendations contained in the document (A/48/335) on the need for and feasibility of the establishment of a diversification fund for Africa's commodities are useful.

Mr. SOEGARDA (Indonesia): I should like at the outset to express to the Secretary-General my delegation's appreciation of his informative and comprehensive report (A/48/334) on agenda item 24, concerning the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. While we concur with the views expressed this morning by the Chairman of the Group of 77, my

delegation would also like to contribute to this critical and important discussion by highlighting some issues that we believe to be of particular importance to the implementation of the Agenda.

The New Agenda for the Development of Africa has been hailed as an unique departure in international development cooperation. As is rightly pointed out in document A/48/334, a major difference between the New Agenda and earlier programmes is that it sets specific targets to be achieved in the present decade. It is also based on the principle of shared responsibility and full partnership between Africa, the international community and the United Nations system.

In our view, African countries have made a significant effort to honour their commitments under the New Agenda, especially by undertaking economic and social reforms, such as diversification of their economies, to overcome various structural handicaps to meeting their development needs. Yet, no matter how extensive such reforms have become, they are very dependent, in our increasingly interdependent world, upon the external environment. Unless that environment is favourable, all such efforts will come to naught. Therefore, the international community - especially the major economic actors, who make the greatest impact on the world economy - should ensure that their commitments under the New Agenda are honoured in a timely fashion.

Obviously, the first two years of the period covered by the New Agenda saw a world economy in deep malaise, in which the economic and social crisis confronting Africa has been compounded by natural emergencies and social turmoil. Under such circumstances, it is not surprising that the situation in Africa has been persistently bleak. If the implementation of the New Agenda is not addressed comprehensively, the record for the remainder of the decade will not improve.

It is therefore urgent that action now be taken at the international level. Indonesia regards the question of debt as the most critical question and as central to many of the development problems of Africa. Obviously, the current level of debt stock and debt burden is entirely unsustainable and thus constitutes a vast disincentive to the flow of investments to the continent. We believe that both the debt stock and the debt-service burden of those countries should be significantly relieved. In this regard, we urge the adoption of the Trinidad terms, since this would, *inter alia*, reduce debt stock by two thirds. The problem should be addressed in such a way as to allow growth and development to take root and thus to provide a viable means for these countries to grow out of their predicament. In this regard, Indonesia, in its capacity as Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, is in the midst of preparations for the convening of a meeting on the debt problem for the purpose of exploring ways and means of how best the Movement can contribute towards resolving the chronic problem of indebtedness in severely indebted developing countries, particularly in Africa.

Associated with the problem of debt is that of resource flows. Commitments to supporting reforms and restructuring under the New Agenda for the Development of Africa should be made fully tangible by translating them into adequate financial assistance. In that regard, we believe that the commitments made by development partners to fulfil their aid target of 0.7 per cent of their gross national product should be implemented without tying such aid to detrimental conditionalities. The international community should also explore new ways to ensure that development assistance is concentrated in the least developed of the African countries.

As to commodities, we firmly believe that international efforts should be channelled towards supporting diversification policies and that the establishment of a diversification fund deserves our serious consideration. In the short and medium term we should focus on both compensatory financing mechanisms and on efforts to increase and stabilize commodity prices at levels both fair to the consumers and remunerative to the producers. This is even more critical in the context of the African countries, since almost all of them depend on commodities.

My delegation can fully agree with the point made in the report (A/48/334) that traditional assistance in the form of the provision of food and other essential commodities and services has significantly helped to save lives and alleviate mass suffering. The international community should go beyond purely humanitarian considerations to encompass rehabilitation and development for long-term results. Overall international efforts should be undertaken to ensure that African policies and strategies in agriculture, rural development and food security are fully supported and that the food producers, including women, are furnished with the necessary resources in adequate quantity.

Another area that the international community should support is that of economic cooperation and integration in Africa. Obviously, domestic markets are not strong enough to undertake large-scale projects in terms either of production or of infrastructure. Thus, it is necessary to emphasize the larger regional economic area as a feasible framework for these essential purposes and to plan accordingly. Institution-building, human resources and capacity-building should thus be part and parcel of this

process. We are therefore pleased to note that the treaty on establishing the African Economic Community, having been signed already, is now being implemented. We see the value of the emphasis, in the New Agenda, on such integration, and we believe that any initiative in this regard should be fully supported by the international community.

Before concluding, I would like to refer briefly to the role of the United Nations. We can fully support the idea advanced in the report of the importance of the United Nations role in implementing the New Agenda. More specifically, the United Nations should ensure greater coordination among the various programmes for Africa so as to reduce overlap and to increase efficiency. Moreover it should also continue to strengthen cooperation between the Bretton Woods institutions and other bodies of the United Nations system with respect to Africa.

Africa, the international community and the United Nations should collectively ensure that the vast potential of human resources in Africa is not squandered. Rather, working together in a true partnership to implement the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s can unquestionably halt the economic drift, put Africa's development on a sound basis and bolster its recovery in this decade.

Mr. GELBER (United States of America): The United States is pleased to address the question of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. The Agenda is one which we endorse and which we consider vital to expediting Africa's stable, viable growth and its integration into the community of developed nations. The United States shares the United Nations view that African participation and human resources development must be cornerstones of successful programmes for African development. African participation and leadership are essential for promoting long-term sustainable development. African capacity must be strengthened by investments in people and institutions.

We likewise support the efforts of the United Nations Development Programme to promote the coordination of development programmes in Africa. In an era of resource scarcity, it is important to deploy donor resources for African development as efficiently as possible. This requires close coordination among donors and better targeting of resources to African countries where they will have the greatest development impact. We have observed that countries committed to economic and political democratization fare far better on the development scale than those which resist democratic political reform and full participation in the free market.

It is the democratic nations of Africa, reflecting the will of their people, that are best positioned to make the kind of economic changes that improve the lives of their citizens. The development challenge facing most African nations remains imposing, but it is within the capacities of free-market democracies to overcome it.

Economic crises still afflict many of the nations on the African continent. For many countries, per capita incomes have been stagnating or falling; trade and investment flows have remained weak; debt burdens stunt the prospects for new growth. Drought, famine and civil war have turned crises into calamities; no region of the continent has been spared the ravages of man or nature.

The trend towards democracy in Africa must be reinforced by sustainable economic development. The peace and stability that democracy brings can lead to desperately needed private investment, and with it development capital, technology transfer and technological expertise. Disinvestment in Africa will be reversed only when Africa makes itself a more attractive place for new capital. Applying the rule of law, assuring the remittance of profits, and building more skilled workforces: all of these things will help give Africa a far greater role in the global economy.

The first responsibility for building that capacity rests with the African countries themselves; but the developed nations of the world - including the United States - share the responsibility to help. We, the United States, provide bilateral development funding for Africa. In addition, we provide humanitarian and other assistance to Africa.

The United States will be more willing to support the economies of African nations that have embarked upon serious reform. We are working with other creditor nations to provide additional debt reduction for countries cooperating with the International Monetary Fund adjustment programmes.

New trade policies also will help African nations to compete in global markets. Protectionist barriers still impede Africa's competitiveness and its prospects for growth. Africa has much to gain from a successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round negotiations that the United States is pushing to complete by the end of this year.

Africa's economic future is inseparable from its environmental future. An Africa that is yielding to the desert sands and scrub, and an Africa whose soil is eroding, is an Africa diminishing its capacity to feed itself. An Africa that is losing its forests and renewable water

supplies is an Africa that is compromising its ability to meet basic needs for the future.

One African leader has said that the problem of soil erosion has become so serious that his country, viewed from space, appears to be bleeding into the ocean. The United States is helping to heal these environmental wounds.

Sustainable development cannot be accomplished without a renewed sense of urgency about population growth rates that will double the size of many African nations in 15 to 20 years. Rapid population growth imperils efforts to combat poverty and protect the environment. No longer will the United States pretend this problem does not exist. Instead, we will work in partnership with nations in Africa and elsewhere to provide a full range of family planning and reproductive health services, and we will work to improve the status of women.

Today, the world is entering a period of great hope and opportunity. Those who have addressed the Assembly today have made clear Africa's desire to meet the challenge and to participate in the needed effort to build a better future, based on democratic institutions, human rights, and free markets. Africa's commitment to these goals is our encouragement.

The PRESIDENT: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 2011 (XX) of 11 October 1965, I now call on the Observer for the Organization of African Unity.

Mr. SY (Organization of African Unity) *(interpretation from French)*: First of all, I would like to endorse what was said this morning by the representative of Egypt in his capacity as representative of the Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), as well as the remarks of the representative of Algeria, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of African States for the month of November 1993.

It will soon have been two years since the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s was adopted by the General Assembly. Like its well-known predecessor, the United Nations Plan of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 (UNPAAERD), the New Agenda has raised many hopes and expectations in Africa. Indeed, the economic situation in most African countries continues to be difficult, and the economic crisis that started at the beginning of the 1980s in Africa is still being felt.

UNPAAERD did not meet expectations for several reasons, of which the most frequently cited are: the inadequacy of external financial resources, despite the reform efforts of African countries; the emphasis placed on the narrow and often inappropriate concept of structural adjustment; and the absence of appropriate solutions to external African debt, which continues to undermine economic recovery for African countries. Finally, the many follow-up mechanisms were not really coordinated in their operation and did not allow for real multilateral cooperation between Africa and the international community, still less for the timely adoption of corrective measures.

The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s is intended to correct some of these deficiencies by basing itself more on reform programmes conceived by Africans themselves and with a longer period of application. Thus the New Agenda

> "has as its priority objectives the accelerated transformation, integration, diversification and growth of the African economies, in order to strengthen them within the world economy, reduce their vulnerability to external shocks, and increase their dynamism, internalize the process of development and enhance self-reliance". *(resolution A/46/151, annex, chap. II, preambular para. 6).*

To achieve these priority objectives, it is agreed that the international community will enter into a new and stronger contract with Africa which would clearly set forth the international community's firm commitment to support and bolster Africa in its efforts to implement successfully its agenda for development and to reduce, if not eliminate completely, the external impediments and obstacles to the accelerated socio-economic transformation of Africa.

The New Agenda is thus first and foremost a contract, and each partner is responsible for the obligations to which it has agreed.

As for the Organization of African Unity, which includes almost all African States, in its efforts to implement the New Agenda it has granted priority to the establishment of a climate conducive to peace, democracy and development. The OAU has thus geared its efforts to the settlement of conflicts in Africa, and as was stated by the Heads of State and Government of the OAU on the thirtieth anniversary of that organization,

> "the achievement of the objectives of development, integration, democratic transformation and strengthening of democratic institutions requires peace and stability not only on the domestic level but also among African States themselves and in their relations with the outside world".

That is why the OAU is devoted to establishing a mechanism to prevent, manage and settle conflicts in Africa. Furthermore, it is making an active contribution to the restoration or maintenance of peace in several hot spots, such as Liberia, Somalia, Rwanda, Mozambique and Burundi.

These activities, which supplement and strengthen those of the United Nations in the maintenance of world peace and security, are aimed at preventing and containing the negative socio-economic consequences of conflicts. Thus we feel it is crucial to emphasize the importance of the support the United Nations must lend to these initiatives of the pan-African organization.

The second aspect of the OAU's activities to establish a climate conducive to economic development is support for the process of democratic transition. Thus the OAU, since the adoption of the New Agenda, has sent observer missions to 15 African countries. Similarly, it has taken initiatives to help to correct the situation when the transition process has been impeded.

In the matter of economic cooperation and integration, which are important aspects of the New Agenda, the OAU and its member States have made significant progress since the signing in Abuja in 1991 of the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community. The number of ratifications has now exceeded 50 per cent of the members, and we hope that we will soon attain the two-thirds majority necessary for the entry into force of the Treaty. The parallel process of studies and protocols to be annexed to the Treaty is continuing. Consensus has been reached on the draft protocol on relations between the African Economic Community and the regional economic communities, as well as on the draft protocols on transportation and communication and the draft protocol on freedom of movement and the right to residency and settlement in the Community.

A large number of proposals on urgent actions for the restructuring and revitalization of the integration process have been put forward and endorsed by Member States. They include the need to include decisions on and commitments to integration in national plans, policies and programmes, the encouragement of all sectors of the population to participate in the integration process, and an increase in the capacity of communities to set in motion multinational projects in priority sectors of the infrastructure, energy, basic industries and agriculture.

The OAU, together with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the African Development Bank, is actively encouraging African countries to continue to improve the management of economic programmes and policies as well as to promote private initiatives and competitive markets. Similarly, with regard to adjustment, it has been deemed important to go beyond conventional national approaches in order to prepare and implement subregional adjustment programmes. Those programmes would promote mutual assistance between countries in their efforts to liberalize trade through the expansion of regional trade and the achievement of greater integration.

In the area of human resources, the OAU, in cooperation with the ECA and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), organized at Dakar, Senegal, the Third African Population Conference, which adopted a Declaration on Population, Family and Sustainable Development. That Declaration represents Africa's contribution to the International Conference on Population and Development, scheduled for September 1994 at Cairo, Egypt.

In November 1992 the OAU also organized, in conjunction with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Conference on Assistance to African Children to promote the implementation of the Plan of Action of the 1990 World Summit for Children.

With respect to the promotion of the role of women in development, the OAU has strengthened the unit of its secretariat responsible for women's questions. It has also drawn up strategies and policies with regard to areas where women can play a part in development.

Lastly, in order to coordinate activities and improve the health of their populations, the Heads of State and Government of the OAU adopted two important declarations on the crisis in the health sector and on the AIDS pandemic.

In the area of the environment, the OAU initiated action that culminated at Rio in the decision to draw up a convention on the struggle against desertification.

Those are some of the actions taken by the African countries within the framework of the OAU to foster the inclusion in the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa a number of clear-cut priority areas. Those initiatives have been taken in an economically difficult context. Thus, in his report to the last session of the OAU Council of Ministers, the Secretary-General of the OAU stressed that Africa's economic situation has continued to worsen despite the serious efforts made by the African countries to ensure recovery and economic development, and notwithstanding the structural-adjustment programmes and political reforms being undertaken in most of our countries.

Underlying that situation are such internal factors as inadequate policies, poor economic management and the low growth rate. Similarly, the international economic environment has had a negative effect on Africa's economic performance. Continued recession in the industrialized countries has had a negative impact on the demand for African raw materials, further depressing their prices. Africa's external debt has continued to rise, reaching $288 billion in 1992. That situation has been created not by new loans but, rather, by the capitalization of interest, which the African countries have not been in a position to pay.

As the report of the Secretary-General of the OAU also indicates, debt-servicing payments in 1992 exceeded $26 billion, or nearly a third of Africa's total export earnings. Obviously, the African countries cannot achieve significant progress in their socio-economic development until and unless a lasting solution is found to the debt problem, which is the major impediment to development in the continent.

Faced with that situation, what has the United Nations New Agenda contributed? If we consider the efforts made by the international community to promote implementation of the New Agenda, the United Nations has taken a number of steps, such as the System-Wide Plan of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development; the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on African Economic Recovery and Development, which includes all organizations of the United Nations system, the OAU, the African Development Bank, the Global Coalition for Africa, and the non-governmental organizations, has begun its work. The Tokyo Conference on African Development was also an important initiative. Lastly, the Panel of High-level Personalities on African Development is a welcome innovation. The OAU has noted with pleasure Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali's personal participation in that Panel and the leadership and energy he has lent to its work. We would express the hope that such consciousness-raising efforts will continue, and with increased intensity, in order to keep Africa a priority matter among the international community's concerns.

Although two years is too short a period to make an accurate assessment of the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa, some unsettling indicators have emerged. First, the Secretary-General's report mentions the fact that the international community has not provided financial support commensurate with the magnitude of the economic reforms being carried out in Africa. The volume of bilateral assistance, for example, dropped from $12 billion in 1990 to $10.7 billion in 1991.

Such inadequate support is one of the causes of the low rate of growth in Africa since the beginning of this decade. Per capita income fell by 15 per cent from 1980 to 1992. More seriously, the continent's self-sufficiency ratio in major foodstuffs has stagnated or has actually declined. Lastly, sub-Saharan Africa's exports fell by almost 15 per cent from 1990 to 1992. All those factors demonstrate that the situation in Africa is disquieting globally.

This session of the Assembly should therefore provide an opportunity to examine the requisite ways and means to implement the New Agenda. On the national level it will be important for the African countries to continue their efforts to achieve economic and political reform. However, it is at the level of the international community that the greatest efforts are required. First, there is an urgent need to adopt measures that can lead to an effective reduction of the debt stock beyond the Toronto terms. It is also important for donors to provide additional support to efforts designed to ensure Africa's economic integration. A decision must also be taken to create within the African Development Bank a mechanism for the diversification of African commodities, for without such diversification the African economies will never become competitive and their dependency on one or two commodities will inevitably exacerbate their marginalization. This, then, is a proposal important for Africa, and we call upon all our partners to study it in the spirit of solidarity and partnership that the New Agenda seeks to foster.

Another issue calling for urgent measures is the strengthening of the machinery for following up the Agenda. The Bureau of the Coordinator clearly suffers from a lack of resources, especially human resources.

Similarly, procedures must be established for consultation and concerted action between the United Nations, the OAU and African Governments, particularly with respect to monitoring the implementation of the New Agenda. In this connection it would be desirable for the consciousness-raising machinery to be organized on several levels and with greater involvement by non-governmental organizations.

The New Agenda has been very slow off the mark. Distribution of the documentation available at this session has been very late, although its quality has been good. It will therefore have a delayed impact on the ground. It is quite clear that sustained efforts will be required if the New Agenda is not to meet with the same fate as the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. The spirit of partnership underlying that Programme must be revived

and new initiatives, particularly with regard to lightening the debt burden, will be required.

Africa is now committed to a process of democratization that requires consistent economic support if it is to succeed. Thus, we hope that the measures taken to support democracy in other regions of the world will be extended to Africa. That, as we see it, is the message that should go forth from this discussion.

The PRESIDENT: I should now like to make a few remarks on my own behalf at the conclusion of this important debate on the New Agenda for the Development of Africa.

The conditions of life in many countries of that continent, as described in the Secretary-General's reports, remain very difficult. Yet the reports show that the Governments have been willing to attempt bold, though painful, economic reforms and to stay the course while those reforms take effect. The African peoples have accepted a degree of austerity that not many others would be prepared to bear. I would therefore like to commend the Governments and peoples of Africa for their perseverance in the face of prolonged adversity.

Despite some occasional setbacks, the trend towards democracy and wider popular participation continues. Understanding and support for Africa comes not only from the industrialized countries, but from other developing nations which also struggle with the heavy burden of external debt, with adverse terms of trade for their commodities, with threats to their environment and with the pressing need, notwithstanding the sluggish world economy, to develop their human resources and to exploit their economic potential. Africa's efforts surely merit our understanding and support.

Secondly, I should like to emphasize that the New Agenda truly measures international solidarity and commitment. For many years, the Assembly has been promoting the social and economic development of its growing number of member States. In 1986, it held the first and only special session directed to one continent, and created the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development. When this Programme was reviewed in September 1991, the international community reaffirmed its partnership with Africa and offered full and tangible support for Africa's economic development.

The progress of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s therefore reflects Member States' capacity for effective partnership. In this context, I should like to join in the general expression of appreciation to Japan for organizing, together with the United Nations and the Global Coalition for Africa, the important Conference last month.

Thirdly, this programme, to which the United Nations has accorded priority, provides a challenge for our system in the field of development that parallels its challenge in the domain of peace. It anticipates the combined development efforts brought to bear on the neediest continent by the United Nations, the specialized agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions.

We are in the process of preparing and adopting a new agenda for development, and already Africa offers a testing-ground for the will and capacity of United Nations agencies to work together to achieve tangible results that improve the lives of millions of people. We look forward, therefore, to considering, before the end of this session, a draft resolution which will refer to progress on the undertakings entered into by the Assembly two years ago, and will also take note of the thoughtful reports provided by the Secretary-General and reflect the tenor and content of the debate just concluded.

May I, finally, thank the Office of Conference Services for making an exception to our rules and for giving us some extra time to allow for the conclusion of this important debate today.

I should like to inform members that the Assembly will consider at a later date, to be announced in the *Journal*, a draft resolution to be submitted under agenda item 24.

AGENDA ITEM 8 *(continued)*

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK: REPORTS OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE (A/48/250/Add.6)

The PRESIDENT: I draw the attention of representatives to the seventh report of the General Committee, contained in document A/48/250/Add.6, concerning a request for the inclusion in the agenda of an additional item submitted by Rwanda, and a request for the inclusion in the agenda of an additional item submitted by Cuba.

In paragraph 1 (a) of the report, the General Committee recommends the inclusion in the current session's agenda of an additional item entitled "Emergency assistance for the socio-economic rehabilitation of Rwanda".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to include this additional item in its agenda?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: In paragraph 1 (b) of the report, the General Committee also recommends to the Assembly that the item be allocated to the Second Committee.

May I take it that the General Assembly adopts that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: Next, I should like to draw the attention of representatives to paragraph 2 (a) of the report of the General Committee.

The General Committee recommends the inclusion in the current session's agenda of an additional item entitled "Necessity of adopting effective measures for the promotion and protection of the rights of children throughout the world who are victims of especially difficult circumstances, including armed conflicts".

May I take it that the General Assembly decides to include this additional item in its agenda?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: In paragraph 2 (b) of the report, the General Committee also recommends to the Assembly that the item be allocated to the Third Committee.

May I take it that the General Assembly adopts that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: The Chairmen of the Second and Third Committees will be informed of the decisions just taken.

The meeting rose at 7.20 p.m.